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ROMANCE OF THE BOURBON CHÂTEAUX

BY

ELIZABETH W. CHAMPNEY

Author of "Romance of the Feudal Châteaux," "Romance of
the Renaissance Châteaux," etc.

ILLUSTRATED

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PREFACE

VERSAILLES is par eminence the château of the Bourbons, and he who knows it intimately has lived through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

For many years the author has strolled in its enchanted garden, until the mossy statues have whispered to her the secrets hidden in the charming *bosquets*. Summer after summer she has paced the long galleries with one whose acquaintance with the Court beauties of the old régime was so intimate that he could beckon them from their frames. Their bewitching semblances look down upon the romancer still, though her artist-comrade has wandered away in search of his fellow magicians, Mignard and Watteau, Nattier and Boucher, who gave those lovely ladies their earthly immortality.

The remembered charm of those days is so fresh and powerful that the present seems unreal, and the author gladly escapes from its

pain and loneliness through the door of imagination into the gardens of the past, and relives those years of privilege and happiness, when not Versailles alone, but eighty-seven other châteaux as well, were lovingly visited and enthusiastically traced through many a musty record.

While the neighbourhood of Paris is the locality chosen for the erection of the châteaux constructed in their entirety (or, as the French express it, at one *jet*, like the upspringing of a fountain) during the reigns of the Bourbon sovereigns, many of the provincial châteaux show some touch of remodelling executed at this period.

Often there is a ruined tower to tell of the old feudal chieftain, founder of the family, and an ornate Italianate gallery gives witness to the artistry of the Renaissance, while the main façade, the *corps de logis*, for which an earlier structure has been demolished, is in the style of Mansart. The purist in architecture abhors such composite buildings, but the archæologist finds them a fascinating puzzle, the artist delights in the piquant contrast of ivy-covered Cyclopean masonry, with exquisite carving partly harmonised by a like pathetic desuetude, and the romancer reads

in the alterations and additions stories of the ambition or love which transformed the old building.

Minor châteaux which have thus quietly grown through the ages are to be found in every direction throughout the length and breadth of France. One can scarcely go wrong, and the exploration of a region hitherto undescribed,—the coming suddenly upon an unknown treasure,—is such a delight that it seems an act of impertinence to lessen the number of such surprises. But the joy of travel is twofold: it lies not only in discovery but also in recognition; and to come across a building whose description has long ago stirred our imagination is like recognising an old friend. There is also a less gentle joy on such occasions in contradiction, in rectifying the errors of those who have gone before us, so that the assertions of a writer may furnish forth pleasure to those of critical mind. Such delectation, at least, the author may reasonably hope to afford by indicating certain seldom-trodden paths, near which were found the châteaux whose legends are grouped in the present volume.

We followed one of these paths through Burgundy, that ancient province which dis-

putes with Brittany the prestige of being least changed by the progress of modern times. In the remote region called the Morvan, an isolated spur of the Cevennes mountain-system, are still to be found castles of every period from the time of Vercingetorix to that of Vauban, many of which were the homes of personages eminent in the seventeenth century.

Balzac recognised the fascinations of these Burgundian châteaux, agglomerations of each succeeding age. In his novel, *The Peasants*, he has described a typical one:

“Having passed through a wood I found myself before an iron gate of airy filigree between two lodges, crowned by urns of colossal proportions. At first sight the park seems gloomy, its walls are hidden by climbing plants, by trees which have not heard the sound of the axe for fifty years; the ruts of the avenue are full of water, and the frog tranquilly brings forth her tadpoles therein. The avenue ends abruptly with a pond covered with the great spreading leaves of nymphæas, among which a graceful boat lies rotting; and beyond the pond stands the château of dark-red brick, with courses of stone hewn in facets, whose windows still have small diamond panes. From the central building descends a vainglorious stoop, with a double winding staircase with swelling balusters, slender at the foot, with fattened calves. This main portion is flanked by turrets with little steeples on which are weathercocks of lead in floral

designs, and by more modern galleries with urns more or less Grecian in outline. There is no symmetry; these buildings are put together at random. The trees shake their moisture upon the roof and keep alive the mosses which give colour to the gaping crevices."

We sought this elusive château of Aigues Vives throughout the entire extent of Burgundy, and we found it nowhere and everywhere. Tanlay and Bussy Rabutin had many features in common with it, as had the somnolent park of Saint Fargeau, where the vain-glorious château of the Grande Mademoiselle has gained an added dignity by its atmosphere of isolation from everything connected with our own times. Aigues is only a château of the imagination, but it is nevertheless absolutely real.

The same season we explored another hidden way, dotted from start to finish with most fascinating châteaux afforded by the little river Loir. It must not be confounded with the royal highway of the Renaissance, the better-known Loire, for La Loire is evidently imagined as the *mother* river, while Le Loir is a winsome little lad who loiters at her side.

From the beautiful château of Le Lude we passed to Brittany to find near Vitré Les Rochers, the home of Madame de Sévigné, who

unlocks for us so many of the secrets of the period we are studying, and thence, traversing the province of Maine, we came to the entrancing and melancholy château of O. Then Normandy, with its apple blossoms and hospitable inns, held us captive, and lordly Beaumesnil showed us a perfect example of the architecture of the "Grand Siècle."

On first acquaintance with this ordered style one misses the picturesque charm of the Gothic and the captivating early French Renaissance; but have patience,—appreciation for these noble buildings, like that for fine and reticent souls, will come with more intimate association, and we shall realise its excellencies.

As we strive to visualise the subtler differences between our own lives and those that went on in these stately mansions we comprehend what a different world it was. The nobles of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, like their more antiquated country châteaux, were built up of inherited aggregations, and were not so well fitted for the problems which they were soon to face as was the style of building which the age evolved. The stream moves more rapidly as it approaches the cataract, but, save during the flurry of the Fronde, events glided so somno-

lently for the nobility under Louis XIV. that a placid confidence that time was at a stand-still is manifest in the interminable memoirs whose cheerful prolixity we have endeavoured to reproduce in our opening chapters.

Insolent, inconsequential, of the world worldly, they lived their *naïve*, narrow lives with a gallant gaiety, and sometimes a touch of true nobility,—that *noblesse oblige* which is so indescribably potent as to make of the most captious critic an apologist of the old régime.

“Long have been dead these ladies gay,
Their very heirs have passed away;
But their old portraits, prim and tall,
Are smiling in the ancient hall.”

“J’aime à vous voir dans vos cadres ovales,
Portraits fanés des belles du vieux temps,
Tenant en main des roses un peu pales
Comme il convient à des fleurs de cent ans.”

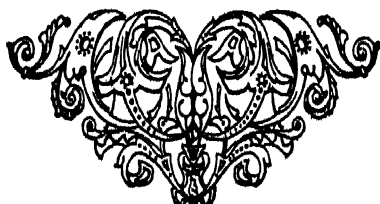




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ROMANCE OF THE BOURBON
CHÂTEAUX



ROMANCE OF THE BOURBON CHÂTEAUX

CHAPTER I

THE MILL OF THE GODS

Though the mills of God grind slowly,
Yet they grind exceeding small.

F. VON LOGAU, translated by LONGFELLOW.

I

“A STRANGE name for that old boulder, did you say, Monsieur le Marquis? It does not seem so to me, perhaps because in my childhood I have heard the legend told so many times by the peasants, and always with perfect faith.

“You would hear it from me, Mademoiselle? It is only a people’s legend and not one made to please noble folk, though it may

do no harm that such as you should know what traditions are repeated beside the hearths of the *chaumières* in the long evenings of our Burgundian winters.

“The stone does not look as if it had ever turned or would turn again, it is so solidly planted; and yet *La Pierre qui Vire*—‘the Stone that Turns’—is its name throughout all the countryside.

“The story goes that ages ago it stood upright, for it was the pestle in the mortar of the old gods with which they ground human beings, gentle and simple alike, as though they were grain. On one side of the pestle was the area belonging to the nobility, on the other that of the peasants; and the great pillar of stone rocked backward and forward, each class in turn suffering the grinding of the gods, for in those days suffering, like death, came impartially to all the sons of men.

“Now, there dwelt in an old castle near this spot, a baron of the race of Bourbon-Archambault, then but a rude clan of bandit seigneurs who enlarged their province of Bourbonnais by conquest from weaker nobles, and, growing more aspiring as well as unscrupulous with every generation, at last secured the alliance which made them the far-away

ancestors of our sovereign lord the King. But this particular baron had none of the blood of the gentle St. Louis in his veins; he was so savage and formidable that he was called the Wild Boar of the Morvan, and so haughty that he could never bear the sight of the Mill of the Gods, which reminded him of the rights of the people and the vengeance of the immortals. According to his notion the peasants alone were created to be ground and the nobility were divinely appointed to grind them; and there was no equality of any kind to be tolerated, not even that of suffering. So when it came to his knowledge that his only daughter loved a son of the common people,—a brave youth with no stain, but plebeian birth,—he was as a mad man, threatening both with death; for marriage, according to his notion, was only a means of aggrandisement. But the girl had inherited something of her father's wilfulness, and she met her lover here, beside the Stone that Turns. It was an appropriate as well as a convenient trysting-place, for it marked the boundary of her father's estate, and the space beyond it was the peasants' burying-ground, free to all comers.

“Here one night the old Baron of Bourbon-

Archambault, returning with his retainers from some foray, surprised the lovers, and the Baron had the youth staked to the ground on the people's side of the monolith. He said that he would prove his cause with the gods as to whether noble or peasant should be ground to the earth in their mill.

"It was no fair trial, for he sent for all the oxen on his lands, and, fastening the great pestle by strong cables to their yokes, succeeded in toppling the pestle over toward the peasant's little God's-acre, so that it lay immovable, as it lies now, with the side of the nobles, on which you see the carven *fleur-de-lis*, uppermost.

"It fell squarely across the legs of the unfortunate young man, crushing his bones to pulp, and leaving him to die in lingering agony, for no force known could set the pillar on end again, nor was there surgical skill available. The Baron rode away with his retainers, laughing bitterly, 'You see upon which side of the mortar the gods grind.'

"His daughter knelt by her lover till he died, and then wandered away, a maniac. She never returned to her castle, but begged from door to door or was afforded hospitality by the poorest. Always on leaving, she ut-

tered the same words, 'The mill-stone will turn, and it will grind the Bourbons to powder.' ”

The young peasant's audience of three persons,—the old Vicomte d'Auray, his daughter Jeanne, and their guest, the young Marquis, Michel de Louvois, had listened to the story with varying sentiments. The older man was simply indignant.

“What do you mean,” he asked angrily, “by uttering such a mixture of lies, treason, and nonsense in my presence? The wretch you have described deserved death for his insolent presumption. If a peasant dared so to insult our family I would shoot him like a dog.”

His daughter Jeanne laid her hand soothingly upon her father's arm:

“I am sure Sebastien intended no disrespect,” she said gently, as she led him away.

“Then what did he mean? It is treason to speak so insolently of the ancestors of Louis the Fourteenth. He is not such a marvel of stupidity that he cannot understand that he stands on the other side of the Mill from us. Does he dare to threaten us?”

“Not threaten, Father; but possibly he wishes to warn us.”

“Curse his impertinence! You are to

blame for this, Jeanne,—you and Michel; you have encouraged the young rascal until he speaks his mind before his betters. But I'll have no more of it. Do you hear, Michel? That young scamp is never to set foot on my estates again."

The Marquis, who had now joined them after a parting word with the peasant, lifted his eyebrows slightly and glanced questioningly at Jeanne. She gave him no clue to her own wishes, and he replied slowly: "I told Sebastien that he had made an ass of himself. When he has anything really at heart he has n't sense enough to hold his tongue."

"You are a poor advocate. If he is so impulsive that he cannot cloak his sentiments, then he really means something. What is it?"

The Marquis shrugged his shoulders. "Who cares what that *canaille* mean? Nobody in our class. But, Vicomte, Sebastien is the best guide in all the Morvan, and we have still much to explore. You will permit him, will you not, to continue to serve me?"

"If you will keep him in his place, Michel. I was shocked to learn that you allowed him to play billiards with you yesterday. No matter if I do play occasionally with my valet. Grégoire never presumes to beat me, and

Grégoire tells me that this fellow beat you every game. No, Michel, I do not take back what I said. Go with him if you like, but he may wait for you at the lodge. He never enters my grounds again."

Jeanne had listened silently. She had made no answer to her father's reiterated question, "What does he mean by telling such a story?" because by a woman's fine instinct she knew too well what he meant.

She reviewed step by step their brief acquaintance. It was the Marquis de Louvois who had discovered Sebastien; she must thank him for that, though she had little love for this fine gallant who had come to Burgundy to study their old fortresses, but who much preferred studying her. De Louvois was the son of her father's friend, the Secretary of the War Department, who desired to purchase the reversion of his office for his son. It was for his sake that the Vicomte d'Auray had leased the long uninhabited castle of Bazoches, near some of the most interesting military relics of mediæval France, and, having installed himself here with his daughter, had received the young man as his guest and pupil.

But the adage concerning leading a horse

to water was to be fully exemplified, for no force hitherto applied could make the Marquis de Louvois drink of the founts of knowledge. And yet he was no fool: behind his inertia there was a reserve fund of administrative ability and keen insight into character, which would one day proclaim him a great organiser of schemes and manager of men. At present this faculty was most conspicuous in the rule of conduct which he had set himself of never doing personally what he could bribe or compel another to do for him.

But the old Vicomte loved his sluggish pupil, and believed that his mental faculties were only slower in development than his ample physique. He noted with pleasure the light spread over the lymphatic face when Jeanne's voice was heard carolling blithely in another room. Jeanne herself was possessed with an ungovernable desire to make sport of her admirer, and the more she teased and tormented him the more obstinately he loved her.

One day the Vicomte suggested that it would be well for Michel to begin the series of measured drawings, desired by his father, by a plan of the neighbouring citadel of Pierre Pertuis, which anciently defended the highway leading to the great abbey of Vezelay.

De Louvois's face fell. "And will you and Jeanne go with me?" he asked.

Jeanne laughed derisively. "And for what purpose?" she mocked. "Do you want my father to hold the ladder while you take measurements, or do you propose that I shall light you with a flambeau when you explore the *souterrains*? At your present rate of procedure, how long will it take you to accomplish your mission to Burgundy?"

"I am in no hurry to go back, Jeanne."

The girl tossed her head. "Oh, I am not deceived by your flattery. You care no more for me than for the fortresses; I am simply an excuse for laziness."

The Marquis rose with determination. "You shall take that back before I return to Paris!" he said.

"You have offended him," said the Vicomte, as the door banged behind the angry de Louvois. "Michel's is a nature which can be led, but not driven. You will please me by riding with me later in the morning to Pierre Pertuis. We will surprise him there as he proposed."

Jeanne would never forget the day or place, for it was at the ruined citadel that she had first met the teller of the legend of the Mill

of the Gods, young Sebastien Le Prestre, who was to exert so powerful an influence upon her own life and on that of the Marquis de Louvois.

Arrived at Pierre Pertuis, Michel had left his horse at a wretched cabaret in the huddle of hovels which seemed to have sprung out of the walls of the fortress, and proceeded to explore the ruin. Situated on the edge of the precipice, at whose foot frothed the little river Cure, it had witnessed the setting forth and the return of the Crusaders and had held the English in check when the Black Prince overran other portions of France. As the Marquis stumbled over the débris he came suddenly upon Sebastien, who, to his surprise, was engaged in making a drawing of the great donjon tower.

"I live here," the youth explained. "The Abbé Fontaine has been allowed to use that part of the ruin as his dwelling. He adopted me when I was left an orphan at the age of ten, and has brought me up on drawing, mathematics, and French history. He is one of the best men in the world—a saint, but he has mistaken his vocation; he should have been a general, and he is a priest. Come, you must see him."

Sebastien led the way to his foster-father's home. They passed through the kitchen, which occupied the first story of the tower, where a wrinkled crone was stirring the *pot-au-feu*, and up the spiral staircase to the Abbé's study, which was also his bedroom. Here a keen-eyed, bushy-browed old man sat, surrounded by a litter of papers. On the walls were maps and plans, a shelf of books, and a crucifix and *bénitier*. He received the Marquis with dignified courtesy, and watched him silently while Sebastien hastened to place before him the drawings which he had made of the citadel.

"They interest me immensely," de Louvois explained to the Abbé, "for I wish to make plans of the castle, and I can make nothing of the agglomeration of walls. Richard Cœur de Lion himself in its present state could not tell what existed when he knew it, and what has been added since."

"The Abbé and I have studied all that out," Sebastien replied. "It is better sport than a puzzle. You may make tracings of these plans, then come with me and I will show you the different states of the castle. There are no end of interesting old ruins hereabouts, to which, if you wish, I will be your guide. It

is such a delight to find any one who cares for them."

Later in the day, when the Vicomte d'Auray and Jeanne arrived at Pierre Pertuis, the former was greatly surprised by the drawings which the Marquis showed them and by the intelligent exposition which he gave of the vicissitudes through which the citadel had passed.

"I am delighted, my boy," the Marquis explained. "I could not myself have worked out the problem so well."

De Louvois winked at Sebastien, but made no confession of the assistance which he had received, presenting his companion only in his quality of guide, and asking him to show the ruins to Jeanne, as the Vicomte had decided that they presented too rough a pathway for his gouty foot.

Jeanne had no inkling of the ability of the young man who explained to her the points of vantage of the castle, nor did she follow with any comprehension his exposition of feudal warfare. Woman-like, she was occupied with a study of the personality of the speaker. Though she gave him only a slant glance now and then, she noted accurately and always remembered every detail of his costume, every expressive gesture and elo-

quent glance. How picturesque he was,—his alert, athletic figure, clad in a mountaineer's suit of dark green cloth, with scarlet vest and leathern gaiters. His long black hair framed a face which, though bronzed by exposure, was more finely cut than that of de Louvois; and as she contrasted it with the Marquis's somewhat gross features, she gave a little sigh without realising the cause of her discontent.

From that day Michel and Sebastien had been inseparable, and though the Marquis never acquired his guide's enthusiasm, under his guidance the old castles and even the science of fortification took on a new meaning.

Jeanne noticed the change in their guest. Every day he set out upon long excursions, returning absorbed and serious. Between his voracious mouthfuls he would ejaculate short, sententious phrases, showing that he had visited some strategic point, and, marvel of marvels! understood its significance. Frequently de Louvois would bring Sebastien back with him, and then a more racy account would be given of the day's experiences. But, as Sebastien soon understood that technical details were lost on Jeanne, he never touched upon them. Serious knowledge, she imagined, could not be acquired

without painful effort, and, while she found Sebastien vastly entertaining, his very enjoyment of the excursions was a proof to Jeanne of his lighter character.

It was strange how fond he was, and how many traditions he could tell, of the old château of Bazoches, which had remained uninhabited so long that people in the neighbourhood had no memory of its former owner, the old Seigneur de Vauban. Somewhere there existed a member of the family, and it was of his attorney at Avallon that the Vicomte d'Auray had rented the castle, and the great unproductive estate, which included on one side the ruined fortress of Pierre Pertuis and ran up into the wild mountains, where wilder lumbermen and charcoal-burners felled the forests and hunted the game, giving no account to the absentee owner. The château consisted of three grim old feudal towers, united by some simple wings of rough masonry. It stood on a commanding site on the side of the mountain, very bleak without and bare within; a grange nestled on one side: on the other was a terrace from which one could see the abbey of Vezelay in the west and Pierre Pertuis on the north.

An intolerably rude and lonely place in the



BAZOCHES, CHÂTEAU OF VAUBAN.



APPROACH TO BAZOCHES.
From photographs by J. Wells Champney.

opinion of the Marquis de Louvois, where one could do nothing but sleep and eat, for Jeanne would not allow him to make love to her, and from which he was glad to escape on the long rides to study some Roman camp or fortress of Vercingetorix. But Sebastien had a love for the castle that amounted almost to reverence, perhaps because it was the background for Jeanne's portrait, and whenever her image rose in his mind it was framed by the ivy-clad walls of the old château. Until the Vicomte banished him he was there every morning, waiting on the terrace for de Louvois to finish his breakfast; and Jeanne would nod to him from her window in the tower and come down to accept the little gift of trout or nuts or wild-flowers which he never failed to bring her.

There was nothing of the coquette in her nature, and she had been brought up to believe that *mésalliance* was dishonour; but little by little, with no spoken word from either, Jeanne had come to know that both young men loved her. Which she loved she had not yet asked herself, but she knew that in all probability she would in the end succumb to her father's wish and marry the Marquis de Louvois. The latter had been

vaguely conscious for some time that Sebastien was forgetting his position. In this year of 1651, the nobility believed that their victory in the first Fronde had silenced the voice of the mob for ever. On their last excursion before their visit to the Mill of the Gods, the political situation had been discussed, and Jeanne had asked her father whether Cardinal Mazarin had a right to imprison the President of Parliament.

"Right or wrong," he replied, "Parliament cannot help itself," and, nettled by the question and his own unsatisfactory answer, he rode on impatiently in advance of the young people.

De Louvois laughed disagreeably. "The Parliament represent the people, you know, Jeanne; and so long as we have the power who cares about right or whether they like what we do or not?"

"They say that the Prince of Condé cares," Sebastien had said, daringly; "and that is why the Cardinal has taken himself off to Germany. The people of France are loyal to their King, but he is only a boy, and we will not submit to have him and ourselves tyrannised over by a foreigner. You will see that if Mazarin returns it will be the signal for the

Fronde to break out again, and we will call upon Condé to lead us."

"And you will wait till doomsday before he will answer. The Prince of Condé is a Bourbon of the proudest blood in France. Sebastien, if you value your head, have nothing to do with rebels. Come to Paris with me, and I will take you into my service and show you some things which will surprise you. Why, man, the Louvre is not the old fortress which you seemed to think it when speaking of it the other day. It is now a magnificent palace."

"I do not care for palaces," Sebastien replied, "and I should stifle in Paris. I would rather have the roughest of the old feudal towers of Burgundy than all that Italian luxury. It is the dream of my life some time to own the fortress of Pierre Pertuis, build a *presbytère* for Abbé Fontaine, and restore the old ramparts just as they were in the time of the Crusaders."

Michel laughed. "Own Pierre Pertuis! Well, that is sufficiently ambitious for a peasant! Why don't you say the château of Bazoches while you are about it? It is as easy to build one castle in the air as another."

Sebastien scowled, for it was the first time

that Michel had spoken to him insolently; but he bit his lips and was silent until de Louvois struck spurs to his horse and joined the Vicomte. Then he stepped close to Jeanne's side and asked her hurriedly:

"Do you despise me as he does? I know I have done nothing as yet to deserve your respect, but if I should go away and make a career for myself,—if I should prove myself a man among men and come back with honours which I deserved,—would you still despise me because I am peasant-born?"

"Certainly not," Jeanne said, impulsively. "I will despise you for nothing but for dishonourable conduct. If you act nobly, you are noble."

"Bless you, Mademoiselle, for that word! I will remember it all my life, and it will give me courage for the task I have set myself."

The Marquis de Louvois, riding sullenly on before, had not heard this conversation; but, turning in his saddle, he observed the young man's impassioned gesticulation, and the yielding droop of Jeanne's graceful figure intensified his displeasure. He struck the unoffending dog which leapt at his foot a savage blow, and cantered on, leaving him howling dismally.

The Marquis was not the same dull, sloth-

ful youth that had come to Bazoches in the early summer. He had wakened from his torpidity; the voluptuous chin had grown squarer and stronger. Sometimes, as now, when he set his teeth firmly together, his jaw had an ugly look. He spent his evenings in his room reading, drawing, studying, until late into the night. The old Vicomte remarked these indications with glee. "You have made a different man of him, my child," he said to Jeanne.

"Can a girl ever do that?" she asked incredulously. "It seems to me that all we women can do is to bring out the best or worst there is in a man; we cannot really change his nature."

But *something* had changed de Louvois. Was it really his love for her? He worked now with a vehemence of which she had not thought him capable. Neither the Vicomte nor Jeanne guessed that he was occupied in tracing the plans which Sebastien had measured and drawn, and in striving to study out and comprehend his discoveries,—that all this knowledge which he was gaining was simply an assimilation and plagiarism of the other's inventions.

The first inkling which de Louvois had had

of his companion's genius had come to him over a game of billiards,—a new experience to Sebastien. The carrom shots immediately suggested to his mind the system of ricochet firing, which he afterwards developed.

"This is great, great!" he exclaimed. "Monsieur de Louvois, how can I thank you! This little game has shown me how to attack the most impossible points. Henceforth no site is impregnable."

De Louvois was in a peculiar position. He wished to draw out explanations of all of Sebastien's inventions, but when he visited him at his own home the Abbé Fontaine, who possibly suspected his designs, took a part in the conversation and hindered him from obtaining the very points which he desired. Then, suddenly, Sebastien's daring relation of the legend of the Mill of the Gods had brought upon him the Vicomte's displeasure and his banishment from Bazoches, a state of things which pleased de Louvois when he thought of Jeanne, but which much interfered with his other schemes. One day, the Vicomte left Bazoches, announcing that he would not return until the morrow; and that evening, Sebastien, at de Louvois's request, brought all his original designs to the château, and

spent half the night in Michel's study explaining his systems of defence and attack.

"Sebastien Le Prestre, you are a genius!" de Louvois cried, as the new ideas dawned upon him. "Where did you get that conceit of polygonal planning?"

"It is only a development of Cœur de Lion's flanking towers," Sebastien replied. "See how very simple it is. With a little knowledge of geometry any one could have worked it out." He demonstrated rapidly how the flanks of his bastions swept each other, and what angles, radii, and tangents must determine the position of ravelins, curtains, scarps, counterscarps, fosse, tenaille, and glacis, until de Louvois's mind was reduced to imbecility. But though the Marquis could not at once master the system, he comprehended that here was an invention which would revolutionise the art of defence. Meantime Sebastien was devouring at a glance the work of the Comte de Pagan, which Michel had found such painful reading.

"Lend it to me," he cried: "he has anticipated me in several points which I thought I had discovered, but I go farther than he does; how absurd that he did not see that for any polygon of more sides than seven——"

"For heaven's sake, Sebastien, have done, or you will drive me mad! There is something in your notions; leave me the designs to study at my leisure. Of course, you may have that book and those engravings of Albert Durer's and this translation of the Italian work,—you may have them all in exchange for your portfolio of drawings; but they must be mine as absolutely as though I had made them, and you must never betray that I did not. Is it a bargain?"

"What! that batch of stuff? Do whatever you like with them. And are all these books mine? How generous you are! How can I ever thank you?"

Sebastien could not leave the grounds without passing into the garden and looking up at the light which burned in Jeanne's window in the opposite tower.

Suddenly, as though made aware of his presence by some mysterious magnetism, she came to the open casement and saw him standing on the terrace. She clapped her hands silently but joyously, and in hardly a moment was at his side.

"Oh, you rash boy!" she chided; "why did you venture to come to me when my father has forbidden you?"

"It was not to see you that I came," he answered, frankly. "The Marquis de Louvois sent for me. I have been with him. I may never come to the castle again, and I could not go without one farewell look from this terrace. I think it is the most beautiful view in all France."

"Indeed! Then I will run back and leave you undisturbed to enjoy your view, since it seems I am not wanted," and she made a pretence of fleeing. He held out his arms imploringly.

"Mademoiselle, you know that it is because I realise the distance between us that I do not presume. It is a lesson of which I had need, and which your father has taught me."

"Ah, why did you bring it upon yourself by telling that miserable legend? Were we not happy enough as we were? Had I ever treated you disdainfully?"

"You have been too kind to me, Mademoiselle; and your father's seeming cruelty was, perhaps, truer kindness. One cannot know too soon when one loves in vain."

"You love me, then? Oh, no, do not make us both wretched by such a fancy. We have been friends, we shall always be, but we must not love——"

"No, we must not love," he said, inconsistently seizing her hands; "there are barriers between us which make it a shameful thing for you to care for me,—a dishonourable thing for me to strive to make you do so. God help me! I would not degrade you by allowing you to love unworthily."

She was weeping, but she did not gainsay him. "Oh, why were you not a noble and I a peasant?" she murmured.

"We are as God made us, I suppose," he said, brokenly. "I cannot make myself of noble birth; you shall not abase yourself for me——"

A shutter banged in the tower which de Louvois occupied.

"Farewell," Sebastien whispered, and let himself down from the terrace, while Jeanne, gliding from shadow to shadow, retraced her steps to the castle, repeating to herself, "We are as God made us. Oh, why did He make us love each other?"

Once in the forest, Sebastien tramped recklessly on, crashing through the underbrush unmindful of caution, until he found himself confronted by the barrel of a blunderbuss and the "*Halte là!*" of the gamekeeper rang out upon the stillness.

Poachers had trespassed lately upon the game preserves, and Sebastien was dragged to the lodge, where he passed the remainder of the night locked in a root-cellar.

It was in vain that he protested that he carried no gun: there were quieter ways of catching rabbits than shooting them, and he was brought before the Vicomte on the latter's return. To add to his mortification, Jeanne had caught sight of him in custody, and entered the great hall, anxious to understand what this might mean.

"So you captured him *in flagrante delictu*, with the game in his bag?"

"Not exactly, sir; but he had a bag with him in which to carry away your lordships' hares."

"There is something in the pouch. Let me see what it contains. What! books? The Comte de Pagan's treatise on fortifications, Albert Durer's engravings,—why, these belong to my guest, the Marquis de Louvois; his name is on the fly-leaves. You have stolen them, you rascal! This is house-breaking, a worse offence than poaching!"

"Ask the Marquis de Louvois if I stole them," Sebastien demanded proudly.

"Yes, Father," cried Jeanne; "at least call

Michel, for Sebastien was with him last evening. I saw him leave the postern gate, for I chanced to be looking from my window."

"Call him if you like, but if Michel denies giving him the books you have only added your testimony against him."

Jeanne ran through the château to the Marquis's apartment and beat upon the door. De Louvois admitted her, rising from a table covered with plans and drawings. Her keen eye took in their number, and as she realised the amount of labour which must have gone to such a result, she exclaimed in admiration, "Michel! Michel! I did not think you were capable of such work. So this is what you have been doing when you shut yourself away from us!" De Louvois's tongue clove to the roof of his mouth and he grew fiery red.

"I did n't intend you should see it," he stammered; "you have taken an unfair advantage. I was going to show you in my own time that I am no *fainéant*."

"Forgive me! You have proved your industry; but come quickly, for Sebastien has been arrested with some of your books, and father is about to sentence him as a thief. He has appealed to you; come and save him."

"Did he say that he bought the books of me?" the Marquis asked sharply; "and did he tell what price he paid for them?"

"No; certainly not. Sebastien would never invent such a fiction as that, nor my father believe it. But you gave them to him, did you not? And if you do not say so, he must go to prison and be branded as a thief."

"No," replied the Marquis; "he shall not. I am not so base as that. I will save him."

The Vicomte looked up sternly as de Louvois entered. "I warned you against this fellow," he said, "and yet you have persisted in associating with him."

"Yes, sir; he has, as you know, served me as guide all the past summer and autumn."

"Was he with you last evening?"

"Yes, sir. We were planning a trip together."

"And these books?"

"I gave them to him."

The disgust of the Vicomte was inexpressible, but Sebastien threw back his long black hair with a quick, characteristic motion, and darted a look of triumph toward Jeanne. She did not see it. Her gaze was fixed upon de Louvois with keen dissatisfaction. The tone in which he had uttered the words, "I gave

them," convinced her that he was not speaking the truth. How, then, had Sebastien come by the books? He had said that he was unworthy of her, that love for him would be degradation. At that instant, Sebastien, though dismissed by the Vicomte, stood in her opinion self-convicted of the crime. She let him go without a glance, and when the others had left the room she joined the Marquis, who was drumming upon the window-pane.

"I understand," she said, sadly. "You told a lie to shield him. You did not give him the books."

"No," he replied, moodily. "I did not *give* them to him."

She pressed his hand. "Thank you, Michel, for I know you did it for my sake ----"

He caught her in his arms. "I would do worse things than that to gain your love," he said, fiercely.

"No, not worse but better," she replied, gently. "You are capable of great things, Michel. I cannot give you my answer now. You are so different. I scarcely feel that I know you, and I do not know myself."

"Good!" he answered, cheerily. "You were certain of yourself in a way that did not

please me a little while ago. I think we are on the way to become acquainted."

After this Jeanne knew that she had lost her vantage-ground, and that de Louvois took her indecision as decision in his favour. She was restless and unhappy, dissatisfied with herself most of all, because, though she believed that Sebastien had stolen the books, she could not dismiss him from her thoughts as a common thief. Why had he stolen them? she asked herself again and again. The Marquis de Louvois was fond of expensive luxuries. There was a gold toilet-set in his room, and jewels, which he might have concealed more easily about his person. There was no market for technical works like these in all this region. Surely it was the height of foolishness to steal articles which could bring him no money!

Her nature was so frank and direct that she determined to ask him his motive at their next meeting, but weeks went by before that was to occur. The Vicomte had given stricter orders to his gamekeepers, and at the lodge Sebastien was not allowed to enter, and the Marquis did not require his services all that winter.

But one evening early in spring, as she was

sitting alone upon the terrace, awaiting the return of her father and Michel, who had gone to a hunting party, she was startled by the appearance of Sebastien.

"Forgive me if I frightened you," he said; "I knew it was of no use to announce my coming. I have done that too often of late to no purpose; and so I climbed the wall at the foot of the hill and came up through the forest. I know the keepers have their orders to seize me, but I *had* to see you, for I have great news. I have just learned something which will change all my life. You do not ask what it is? Perhaps you already know that Cardinal Mazarin has invaded France at the head of an army of German mercenaries. It only needed that to unite all French patriots, nobles, and peasants. The Prince de Condé has accepted the charge of General-in-Chief of the Fronde, and is marching to meet him. The Cardinal and his forces are at Gien. Condé is near Bleneau, and I leave to-morrow morning to enlist under him."

She was silent still, for she could think of no way of framing the question which was uppermost in her mind. He was too excited to notice her trouble, and his words came rapidly, almost incoherently. "There is

something else. It may be that I am mad; that I only imagined that you implied that you might have loved me if I had not been a peasant. Perhaps it was only your goodness striving to make your refusal as gentle as possible. But now the Abbé Fontaine tells me that I am the son of the Seigneur de Vauban, once the owner of this château. That must be why it has always been so dear to me. My mother, too, was of gentle birth, but they fell on evil fortune, mortgaged the estate, and went away, and finally both of them died in poverty, leaving me to the Abbé. He has all the proof, but he never told me until last night. He brought me up to think myself a peasant, that I might know how the humble feel,—that I might sympathise with their wrongs and hardships.

“‘But now that you have taken their side in this quarrel which is rending France,’ he said to me, ‘my object is attained. You may never return, or when you come back you may not find me living, and it is but right that you should know that you are the son of Albin Le Prestre, escuyer and seigneur de Vauban, and of the Lady Edmée Corminolt, his wife. Your birth is inscribed in the registers of the Commune. You are a gentleman, though the

poorest one in France.' So you see, Mademoiselle, you have not unclassed yourself by being kind to me, and I feel that I shall win higher honours, for the way to them is open to me now as it never could have been to a peasant lad. But, for all that, I think I have still a peasant's heart, and I take no shame in making their cause mine. There is only one thing that can make me glad or proud of this news, —the knowledge that you are glad to know of it."

Jeanne's heart had given a great bound. All barriers were broken down between them had been her first thought, for Sebastien was her equal now. His poverty and de Louvois's wealth and higher anticipations counted as nothing. For now her father could not gainsay the fact that Sebastien was of her own class. With his race prejudice it was quite the same as if he had been proclaimed a human being. He saw the exultant surrender in her eyes, and threw himself on his knees before her.

"Oh, my love, my love!" he cried. "You *are* glad. I will make you gladder still. That is nothing of my own doing; but when I come again you shall be proud of me,—of what I have done. I have seen nothing,

guessed nothing. I will come again, and until then I can await my answer."

"Nay, you have it now," she said, as she held him close, for all the love which she had so proudly kept in abeyance rose within her and would not be denied.

So they talked together, she begging him not to go to the wars, until, by long argument, he won her to his way of thinking.

"Michel shall give you a letter to the Prince de Condé," she said, "for he knows him well, and he ought to return soon, for the sun is setting."

"Then I will wait for him in his own room, for I am not ready yet to meet your father, my own. Sebastien de Vauban must have something more than the right to an honourable name before he can ask for the hand of the daughter of the Vicomte d'Auray."

He was hardly gone before the Marquis de Louvois rode into the castle court. Dismounting, he came directly to the terrace and asked angrily, "Who was with you here a moment ago? I saw you from the road below, but you were too much occupied to notice me."

"It was Sebastien," Jeanne replied bravely, but her face paled, for she knew that their pantomime had betrayed them.

"Where is he now?" de Louvois demanded, with his hand upon his sword.

Jeanne caught his arm. "You will not fight him, Michel?" she entreated.

"Fight that *canaille*! No; but I will have your father's hostlers flog him to death, the _____"

She stopped his mouth with her hands. "Michel, he is a gentleman. Listen! you *must* listen!" and she forced him to understand. His rage cooled to something more calculating and terrible as he comprehended Sebastien's birthrights.

"He must prove his pretensions," he said, "then I shall know whether it is to be sword or cord. But, Mademoiselle, I did not know that the mere accident of birth was of such importance in your eyes. Even though this be true, does it make him less of a boor? I thought I once heard you say that nobility was shown by noble conduct."

"Yes, yes," Jeanne replied eagerly. "I did say so, and you believe it, do you not? You will not fight the man I love, Michel? You will tell my father how truly noble Sebastien is?"

"You have set the man who loves you a difficult task," de Louvois replied, a strange expression coming into his face. "Ah, here is

Monsieur de Vauban himself. Perhaps you will be good enough, sir, to explain why you have paid me the honour of a visit to my room in my absence, and what you are doing with my papers?"

The sneer in the tone struck Sebastien, but he extended the portfolio to the Marquis. "I left a letter on your table, explaining that I join the Prince of Condé to-morrow, and I wished some of my drawings to show him that I could be of use. I have only selected a few. You have duplicates, or others illustrating the same principles. I knew you would not care. It means so much to me."

The look of hate deepened into something satanic. "But I do care. Condé is a rebel. He shall not have one of these drawings! Put down the portfolio instantly!"

"Not even my diagrams to demonstrate my system of approaches by parallels, and ricochet firing?"

"*Your* diagrams! *Your* system! Have you the assurance to assert to my face that these drawings are not mine? I saved you once, Sebastien Le Prestre, but this is different. Have you forgotten the little transaction in relation to my books?"

"Yes, the books?" Jeanne asked eagerly.

"Michel really did give or lend them to you, did he not?"

"No, he did not give them; he did not even lend them. Can you not trust me, Mademoiselle, since I cannot explain?"

"Only tell me the truth, Sebastien," she pleaded; and de Louvois interrupted coldly.

"No explanation or confession is demanded. Answer only this question, Are these drawings yours or mine?"

Sebastien made one sweeping bow, which included both Jeanne and de Louvois in its ceremonious farewell. "They are yours, Monsieur le Marquis."

The words were self-incriminating, and yet, as Jeanne looked from one to the other, she was struck by Sebastien's proud bearing of conscious rectitude, and over the hateful triumph in de Louvois's face there crept a hang-dog look that was almost shame. Then suddenly he dashed after Sebastien, calling:

"Monsieur de Vauban, Monsieur de Vauban!"

Sebastien wheeled. It was the first time that he had been saluted by his title, and the name echoed by the walls of his ancestral home had a pleasant sound to him, albeit they were uttered with no good-will.

"I need no confirmation of your pretensions," said de Louvois, "and I will cross swords with you when and where you will, for I believe you to be a gentleman."

"I wish I could say the same of you," Sebastien replied, with infinite scorn. "I have no sword, and no quarrel with you. If I killed you it would not right me in *her* good opinion."

"Then you will not fight, for *her*, for Jeanne? Coward!"

"So please you, we will not disgrace her by bandying her name in this matter; but if you will meet me on the field of battle, I will give you all the fight you wish, Monsieur le Marquis."

"So be it. I for the King, you for the scum, and to the death! for I tell you that this world is not wide enough for us both, and sooner or later, by fair means or foul, I will kill you, Sebastien de Vauban!"

II

THE years rolled by,—weary, monotonous, uneventful for Jeanne, who, disappointed in the man she loved, yet refused to barter herself in the brilliant alliance which her father had so much at heart.

"Why will you not marry me, Jeanne?" de Louvois had pleaded before he went back to Paris.

"Because—" she faltered, "because, in spite of all——"

"Do not tell me that you love him, Jeanne, —a common thief, for you heard him condemn himself."

"I heard him, and yet I cannot believe it. Some day he will be cleared. I have written him so, Michel, and have told him that I will wait, though it be as long as he lives, for I love him."

"As long as he lives," de Louvois repeated to himself. "She shall not have long to wait. I have more cause now to kill him than ever, for he must die before he has opportunity to vindicate himself."

But the fortunes of war did not at first bring them together.

Even without his elaborated drawings, Sebastien had been able to impress the Prince de Condé with a conviction of his genius, and he had been given important duties on every occasion. But while Sebastien's respect for his commander as a military leader grew with acquaintance, his estimate of his aims was to meet with bitter disillusion. When the

Fronde, from which he had hoped so much, had gone to pieces like a frail bridge in a spring torrent, he had, in the first mad *sauve qui peut*, followed Condé into exile in the Spanish Netherlands.

But presently there came to him the conviction that his hero was, after all, a poor thing of clay, with only his own vanity at heart and no thought of the wrongs of the common people. The war had swept across France like a fire in dry grass, blackening and destroying the humble homes over which it passed, leaving the peasants' lot more unendurable. The Parliament had cringed before the iron will of the Cardinal, and all things were as they had been. No, not quite, for, though the cause was lost, Sebastien realised that he had no right to turn his sword against his country; and when Condé, who had accepted a commission under Spain, ordered him to submit to him plans for the fortification of Dunkerque and other towns in the south of Flanders, he went about his task with a heavy heart, knowing that he was on the wrong side.

The possibilities of Dunkerque as a strategical point excited his imagination. "I could either take it," he said to Condé, "or render

it impregnable, but I will not do so for Spain; and the Cardinal, foreigner though he be, is more patriotic in defending the frontiers of France than we who are assailing them."

"You confess it!" exclaimed Condé; "it is you, then, who are the traitor?"

"That is a word which would fit others better than me, my Lord, but I will not throw it in your face. I demand only your meaning."

"I mean that since you have undertaken this work of surveying we have been dogged by spies. Some of your maps have been stolen from my headquarters. I suspected my squire, Tristram, who disappeared a week since; but now that you assert to my face that you would rather your plans were in the hands of the Cardinal, what am I to think?"

"That when I cease to serve you, you shall know it first from me, my Lord. You are wrong, too, in thinking that Tristram has deserted to the enemy. He has been ill for several days. This morning he tramped about the dunes with me, helping me in my measurements. He is a brave lad, for a party of mounted French skirmishers watched us from a distance with a spy-glass and he defied them with extravagant gestures."

"He was signalling to them without doubt.

Have him arrested if he appears again, and trouble your mind with no scruples. We are fighting the Cardinal, not our country. Besides, man, what is one's country? It is the land, is it not, no matter who calls himself master? My ancestral estates of Condé are here in Flanders. Condé is mine, and I am Condé, no matter how the geographical line wavers. You are Burgundian, and Burgundy has belonged to Spain ere this. A man's first loyalty is to himself and to his own interests. One's country is like one's wife,—you can choose her where you please."

Sebastien was silenced, but not convinced. Condé's simile had been an unfortunate one for his argument. His mind wandered back to the Morvan, and his heart was filled with a rush of sweet and of bitter emotions. Could he ever forgive the man who had separated him from Jeanne? Why had they not met to fight out their quarrel? Then suddenly he knew why one of those mounted figures watching him from the sand-dunes had seemed so familiar. The burly form of the officer with the spy-glass had given him the same impression of stolid imperturbability and relentless will which was so striking a characteristic of the Marquis de Louvois.

"If I should change to the other side," he thought, "I would lose my excuse for fighting him. That is one reason for staying where I am."

Shortly after this occurrence, while at Mons, having ridden outside the gates to reconnoitre the environs, Sebastien noticed a man watching him from behind a hedge. Turning down a cross-road and looking back after a time, he saw the same man following him. Reining in his horse he called to him, "Have you any errand with me, my friend?"

"Only this letter," the other replied.

"Ah! It is you, Tristram. Throw it on the ground and go back and hold up your hands." Tristram obeyed grinning.

"You will not shoot me after you have read it, Monsieur," he said. "It is from a lady."

Sebastien stood transfixed, for the letter was in a girlish hand and read:

"I know now that I have misjudged you.

"Forgive me, and, if you love me still, come to your repentant

"JEANNE D'AURAY."

The love which had never died, though outraged and repressed, rose now and would not be denied. "Lead on, Tristram," he said

recklessly; and he followed the messenger to the château of Marimont. He knew that it was in the direction of the French lines, and the enterprise struck him as a dangerous one; but his heart was not in his present service and he felt that he had only his life to risk, and that would be always at Jeanne's service. Night had fallen as they approached the wall of the park surrounding the château. They left their horses at the gate, but Sebastien did not notice a face peering at him from behind the shutters of the lodge, or see that a man left the rear door, trampling excitedly through the flower-beds, and so making his way to the château by a shorter cut than the long avenue up which Tristram led him. They halted at the moonlit parterre in front of the entrance. Here he started, for the place seemed guarded by giant men-at-arms, mounted and on foot.

"They are only trees," said Tristram, and Sebastien saw that the yews had been cut in this fantastic fashion. The building, though apparently in good repair, was silent and dark, except for a beam of light which stole through the parting of the curtains in an upper window.

"How does it chance that Mademoiselle

d'Auray is in this château?" Sebastien asked of Tristram.

"That she will tell you herself, sir," replied the other, giving a shrill whistle

Instantly the curtains were swept aside and two men stood on the balcony in the flood of light which almost blinded him, while at the same time a dozen soldiers sprang from the shadow of the clipped trees and held him securely pinioned. He realised at once the trap into which he had fallen, and he threw his head back, his eyes riveted on the two figures silhouetted against the glare, one of whom cried:

"It is he, your Eminence; it is really he. I give you welcome, Monsieur de Vauban. Guards, bring in your prisoner."

It was de Louvois, and Sebastien, understanding how he had been dogged and spied upon, and tricked at last into the power of his enemy by a forged letter which played upon his most sacred feelings, was filled with a rage so masterful that he would have killed his captor had it been in his power to do so. Instead, he found himself before him disarmed and bound.

The Marquis stood with an air of great self-satisfaction at the side of Cardinal Mazarin,

who was seated in a high-backed chair before a table littered with papers.

To avoid meeting the gaze of his rival, Sebastien studied the face of the Cardinal. He was astonished at what he read, for though Mazarin's glance was searchingly keen there was no malevolence in it. There was triumph and ruse, but over and pervading all a smile of *bonhomie*, which so bewildered Sebastien that he could scarce believe his eyes.

"You identify the prisoner as Sebastien Le Prestre, Seigneur de Vauban?" Mazarin demanded of de Louvois.

"Unmistakably, your Eminence," replied the other.

"Then, Marquis, as your captive is regarding you with no particular good-will, I fancy you will be of little assistance in our interview, and, thanking you for your successful stratagem, I will excuse your further attendance."

"May I speak one word?"

The request came simultaneously, but in very different accents from both young men, as de Louvois wheeled on taking his leave.

"Not one word, my friends," replied the Cardinal with authority, "until such time as I give you leave. Adieu, Marquis."

De Louvois retired reluctantly, and Sebastien, relieved of his presence, strove to rally his self-possession and to meet his fate manfully..

"Young man," said the Cardinal kindly, "the blessings of our lives sometimes come to us in disguise. I know more of you than you realise; not alone your talent as an engineer, but your good intentions; that you were led into your present position from a mistaken idea that you were aiding the people of France, and that you have discovered the true character of the Prince de Condé. Tristram has reported it all to me. The time will come when you will look back upon this night as the most fortunate of your life."

Mazarin spoke truly. From that interview Sebastien went out with a lightened heart.

"The Cardinal confessed me and gave me absolution," he was wont to say, for he was glad to be forced to renew his allegiance to France.

"Only, your Eminence," he said before leaving, "I cannot forgive the Marquis de Louvois. I am reconciled to my captivity, but not to the manner in which it was accomplished."

"Even that may come in time, my son," Mazarin replied. "Time straightens out many tangles. If that letter which you received should come true some day, then I think you would forgive the man who you feel has mocked you."

"This tangle can never be straightened," Sebastien replied. "It is an affair of honour."

"Then be patient, leaving your future with God, who apportions to every man his just reward."

So Sebastien de Vauban entered upon his great career, led by a consuming enthusiasm for his profession and sustained by a sublime devotion to his country. He accomplished wonders from the start, for in that first campaign he conducted the sieges of Gravelines, Ypres, and Oudenarde,—besieging, fortifying, and defending all the towns between the Lys and the Escault; Turenne entrusting him with the sole control of the operations, and asserting afterward that if the Peace of the Pyrenees had not given France the best of Flanders, Vauban would inevitably have taken all its fortresses.

When peace came his labours seemed only to have just begun, for he received orders to proceed to Lorraine and rebuild all the

fortresses which had fallen either by conquest or treaty into the hands of France.

Lorraine adjoined Burgundy, and a wild desire sprang up in his heart to see Jeanne once more, useless as he knew that such a meeting must be; for though he had written her since his successes she had not replied.

He knew the reason, and his heart was bitter against the Marquis de Louvois. And now, by a strange irony of fate, he learned that the old Minister of War was dead, that his son had succeeded him in office, and that he must report for orders to his enemy as his chief. How were they two to meet, who had so long a reckoning to settle? There was a great château of a town house building at his orders near the Champ de Mars, flourished all over with heavy ornate carving, and sculptors were chiselling an equestrian statue of Ludovicus Magnus on the centre of the fronton. Such boastfulness of his monarch's favour disgusted Vauban, but it was like de Louvois. He was not at his new hotel, however, but at his château of Ancy le Franc, in Burgundy, which he had lately purchased from the Count of Clermont Tonnère.

Vauban remembered it as the most palatial of the Renaissance châteaux of eastern France,



LOUVOIS.

From steel engravings in the Musée de Chalcographie of the Louvre.



COLBERT.

well suited in its magnificently decorated apartments to de Louvois's princely tastes. He would lose little time in journeying thither, for it was on the direct route to Lorraine.

At Ancy le Franc he learned to his annoyance that the château was *en fête* to celebrate the visit of Louis XIV. The Italian gardens, glistening with statues and formal beds of brilliant flowers, were still further enlivened by groups of courtiers in rich brocade.

Sebastien had refreshed himself at the village inn, but he felt his sober garb out of place among these birds of gay plumage, and the pompous majordomo was doubtful whether the Marquis could see him. He was in haste to have his business over and begone, for the magnificence of the place was distasteful to him. How infinitely more dignified the old château of Bazoches seemed to him in all its Gothic rudeness and feudal strength!

It was not in him to cringe or truckle, and he haughtily ordered the functionary to send in his name. To the majordomo's stupefaction, although the Marquis de Louvois was engaged in a game of billiards with his Majesty, he was ordered to admit the plainly attired traveller.

Louis XIV. was then a young man of

twenty-four, as radiantly beautiful as an Adonis; the kingly bearing, which from childhood marked him as born to the purple, had not hardened into arrogance,—every movement was graciously condescending, and his impulses were generous and benevolent. To Vauban he seemed almost a supernatural vision, and he sank upon his knees instinctively.

“Rise, Monsieur,” said the young King, kindly; “the Marquis de Louvois has just been singing your praises. He tells me that from a game of billiards, you invented a wonderful theory of ricochet firing and that you promised him that you would never develop or use it until he should give you permission. Do not feel embarrassed, for you are a genius, and as such have a right to my favour. I know more of you than that one invention. See, here are all your polygonal plans and your scheme for advancing by parallels which de Louvois has held in trust all these years, waiting for the opportune moment to bring them to my consideration. The Cardinal, too, was always telling me what good fortune came to our arms when de Louvois stole you from my misguided cousin of Condé. It shall be good fortune for you, too,

Monsieur de Vauban, for I create you my Director General of Fortifications. I trust you like the title; it is a new one, which my Minister of War here has invented for you "

Too stupefied to answer, Vauban looked appealingly for the first time at the Marquis de Louvois. A metamorphosis seemed to have befallen his morose features; they beamed with friendship.

"I am even with you at last, Sebastien," he chuckled; "and to think that you imagined that I meant to take the credit of your inventions! It is enough honour for me to have discovered your talent and to have saved you from using it against France."

The King laughed heartily. "Our good Marquis de Louvois would have his little joke, you see. Confess that you forgive him for the wrong he never committed."

"Jokes, your Majesty, are sometimes harder to forgive than crimes. It is not what Monsieur de Louvois has done that hurts me, but the way in which he did it."

De Louvois was sober in a moment. "You mean the letter. It was the only sure bait that you would rise to, Sebastien, and I am too hardened an angler to lose my fish on account of the pain I may give him. Besides,

I only anticipated in that letter the news I give you to-day. I have explained to Mademoiselle d'Auray, as to his Majesty, the hard bargain into which I drove you at Bazoches. I am not to be outdone by you in honour, Sebastien. Honour kept you tongue-tied, and honour compelled me to confess. No, it was not so hard a thing to do as you think. I was your rival then, but I am so no longer. Fire will not burn for ever without fuel, and in these ten years I have had time to cool and kindle again. Mademoiselle de Souvré reconciled me for the unkindness of Jeanne d'Auray. Here is an invitation, couched in terms identical with those of the letter I forged, and I give you with it a furlough of four months in which to visit your beloved Morvan. Then, Sebastien, come and visit me here, and we will plan together such a cordon of châteaux forts as would have kept Cæsar himself out of Gaul. You shall build them and I will see that they are well provisioned. I have one great ambition—to feed and lodge my soldiers well, for I suffered more from hunger than from any other hardships in my campaigns. His Majesty has graciously permitted me to see that his soldiers are well fed after they are superannuated. Did you see



ENTRANCE TO THE HÔTEL DES INVALIDES.

the château at Paris that I am building for our veterans, Sebastien? It is to be called the Invalides. We will spend our old age there together, my friend. They shall call you in future days the 'Great Builder,' as my soldiers call me the 'Great Victualler.' I am proud of the name, for how can a man keep his heart up with an empty belly?"

He rattled on, with boyish delight at Vauban's emotion, for Sebastien was too much moved to speak. "And now, tell me only that I have retrieved myself—that we are friends, Sebastien," he said; "or are you still anxious to turn the mill-stone of the gods until it falls on all that is noblest in France?"

"Nay, I have heard that legend," said Louis. "I am the mill-stone, and I stand erect between noble and peasant, for with me the reign of justice has begun!"





CHAPTER II

THE CHÂTELAINE OF SAINT FARGEAU

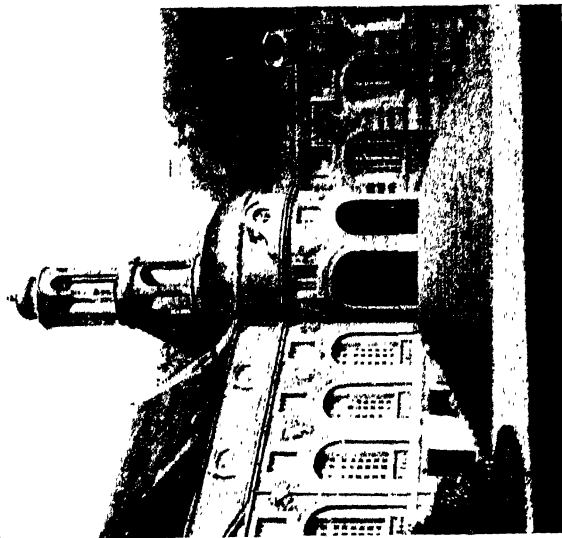
I

THE CHÂTEAU

ROSY in sunshine, purplish in shadow, tapestried with moss and ivy, the huge brick towers of the fortress-châteaux of Saint Fargeau, repeated by reflection in lower tones in the mellowing mirror of the great *pièce-d'eau*, offer a gamut of rich reds, over which the eye gloats with the keenest delight.

Château-rouge—the Red Château—it should have been called, for when the light falls full upon its cluster of round towers they glow like so many beakers of old Burgundy, while in the gloom of evening the dark brickwork between the masses of ivy takes the effect of sinister blood-stains.

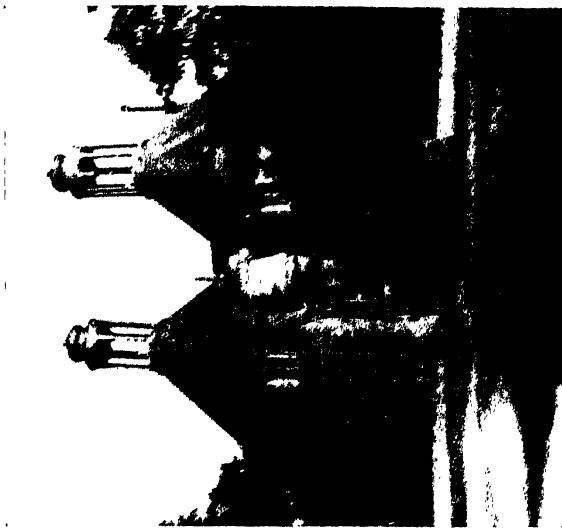
Once the reposeful, opulent colour was contrasted by more piquancy of line, and the



ENTRANCE FROM INTERIOR OF COURT.

THE CHÂTEAU OF SAINT FARGEAU.

From photographs by J. Wells Champney.



ENTRANCE FROM EXTERIOR OF CHÂTEAU.

towers terminated in the sharp, staccato notes of extinguisher-shaped roofs with girouettes of hammered iron, in the fashion universal in feudal times. Now, instead of tapering to graceful points, they end in incongruous little pepper-pot lanterns—insignificant Louis XIV. cupolas, added in the seventeenth century. This jumble of styles—and Saint Fargeau abounds in such architectural inconsistencies—makes the old château all the more fascinating. It is an historical enigma, in whose solution we trace the evolution of more than one drama, culminating in the romantic career of the châtelaine of our story.

With the exception of the hybrid *poivrières*, the exterior of the castle is consistently mediæval, retaining to a wonderful degree the characteristics of the dark ages which saw its birth. Jacques Cœur, the treasurer of Charles VII., simply restored and enlarged in 1450, the old feudal stronghold which Heribest, Bishop of Auxerre and brother of Hugh Capet, had built in the tenth century; and there is no castle of that period in France which is so perfectly preserved. How was it, we wonder, that a fortified château of such strength remained intact, when Richelieu, in his desire

to strengthen the monarchy, demolished the fortresses of the grand seigneurs?

Perhaps it evaded his keen eye, as it does that of the tourist of to-day, by its remoteness from routes of travel and from any town of importance; perhaps because it defended no debated territory, had never figured in the wars of the nation, and had been so long unoccupied by its owners that it was supposed to be in a dismantled condition. Hidden in the depths of its forest in Auxerrois, between Orléannais and Burgundy, it might easily have slept an enchanted sleep—a forgotten relic of feudalism. A greater wonder is that in the reign of Louis the Great, when all the nobles were allowing their castles to fall into decay and were mortgaging their lands in order to live at Court, immense sums were expended and the old château suddenly blossomed into a magnificence which it had never known. For the cupolas hint at a surprise in store for those who pass the barbican, thinking to find the interior of the same date as the grim outer walls. Presto, change! these have vanished, screened by the façades of five long wings of a palace in the pompous style of Louis XIV., which completely lines the castle court, and rows of spacious win-

dows, interspersed with the monogram of Mademoiselle de Montpensier in ornate carving, flank a monumental entrance staircase which leads to a domed chapel. The entire scheme of colour is more florid, the brick is lighter than that used in the exterior, with facings of cream-coloured stone, and the court is a parterre of dazzling flowers.

There is no hint here of the feudal fortress; we are unmistakably in the full blaze of the seventeenth century, in a Versailles somewhat reduced in its proportions, but with almost sufficient room in its interminable apartments to entertain the entire court of the "Sun King." Many of the great salons are still sumptuously appointed with furnishings, tapestries, and precious portraits of the reign of the Grand Monarque, for it was to Saint Fargeau that the Grande Mademoiselle fled for refuge in her time of need, establishing her little Court within its strong defences, finding here eight happy years between the surprising vicissitudes of her agitated life.

Her portrait, in the great hall of the castle, is so full of youthful exuberance that she seems standing there to receive us, holding in one hand the plan of her new buildings and pointing through an open window to a view

of the central façade, for the action carries out perfectly her own admission, "I showed my château with as much pride as my grand-mamma did her palace of the Luxembourg."

Another portrait in an anteroom shows her as Minerva, her blonde curls frolicking from beneath a helmet, and a cuirass, covering, but failing to disguise, the feminine bosom.

You will pass from these grandiose rooms, through fire-scarred and ruinous wings, to the great donjon-keep, still called Jacques Cœur's Tower, a castle in itself, its impregnable outer walls (with the exception of one notable window) broken only by narrow loopholes intended for defence. The tower had need to be strongly built, for it was not only the citadel,—the last resort in time of siege,—but it contained also the treasure vaults, the prison and oubliettes of the castle, and besides these a mysterious chamber, concerning which there was much conjecture and gossip during the residence of its famous châtelaine. The grated window of this room attracts the attention of the observer who studies the giant donjon from a shady *allée* which skirts the old weir, on account of its extraordinary size and its heavy iron grille. Within the grating the



LA GRANDE MADEMOISELLE.

From a steel engraving.

ample window is glazed with panes of greenish glass, leaded in a honeycomb pattern. The spacious room thus lighted bears no resemblance to a prison cell, but is provided with a fireplace and bookshelves, on which repose hundreds of ancient manuscripts—the archives of the château, whose presence alone might explain the jealous safe-guarding of the tower. But the mysterious chamber had its more mysterious occupant, well attested by many witnesses of the day, and proved since by circumstantial and written evidence.

There is no romancer like your devoted domestic. The more attached to the family and the more intelligent, the more active his imagination. Stimulated by the scraps of tradition which he has acquired and by the questions of tourists, who perpetually demand more information than he can afford, his fancy plays about his beloved château, peoples it with the personages whose portraits look down upon him; and he reasons to himself from their faces that so and so they must have thought and talked and acted; that such and such causes and consequences must infallibly have linked the disjointed events that seemed so inexplicable; and, by dint of much repetition, he comes at last to firmly believe

that the fictions with which he has bridged the gaps of history are an original part of the fabric.

So, doubtless, the honest custodian of Saint Fargeau will answer your queries as he did ours.

"You ask me who it was that the Grande Mademoiselle shut up here? My faith! it was her husband,—that rogue of a Duc de Lauzun. All the world knows that she married him against his will,—that my lady's men seized him in an ambuscade, gagged, handcuffed, and brought him here by night. They thought at Court that the King had sent him to the Bastille, but look you! the great Louis was not the only one who could issue *lettres de cachet*.

"Mademoiselle had the right of high and low justice on her own domain. She tried him in the great hall, found him guilty of I know not what crime, and sentenced him to imprisonment for life.

"For eighteen years he languished here—languished, did I say? Nay, he grew as fat as a monk in his cell, for Mademoiselle denied him no luxury but liberty. He was her caged canary—rather her pet leopard, and at last—miracle of love!—he came to be reconciled to his imprisonment. Mademoiselle did not believe it. She caused a file and a rope-ladder

to be sent him secretly, with a letter bidding him note that on such a night trusty friends would wait with horses at the foot of the castle wall. But the Duc de Lauzun showed Mademoiselle the letter and the window-bars unfixed, protesting that he cared not for liberty without her. It was well for him that he so made his choice. The rope-ladder was yards too short, and he would have dropped to certain death even had he not been killed by his fall, for the men waiting for him were Mademoiselle's own guards, with orders to despatch any escaping prisoner.

"An ungentle way to treat a husband, you may well say! but if Madame will study our portrait of Mademoiselle she will remark in her features a decision of character which might well make a false lover tremble.

"The gaillard duke was a sly dog. I am not sure but he recognised the handwriting of the letter and guessed what fate awaited him if he did not feign devotion. When I look at his impudent, handsome face, on the other side of the mantel from Mademoiselle, I do not wonder that he was capable of saying to her at last, 'You are a proud woman, Mademoiselle de Montpensier; you fancy yourself mistress of Saint Fargeau, but, after all. I

am its master and yours,—and you, Louise de Bourbon, may pull off my boots!’”

The story of the guardian of the château is pure fiction, and yet it does not surpass in unlikelihood the veritable history of the Grande Mademoiselle. Her infatuation late in life for the scapegrace who became her husband is well known. It was the lonely woman's forlorn attempt to console herself for early disappointment; but she never resided in Saint Fargeau after her marriage, and though she left the Duc de Lauzun the castle, he came to it only to sell it. Mademoiselle herself loved Saint Fargeau more than any of her châteaux. On no other did she lavish so much reckless expenditure, and in no other did she spend so many consecutive years, at the time when ambition and love were contending for empire over her passionate heart.

What, then, was the mystery of the room with the barred window, which caused so much scandal among Mademoiselle's courtiers? She relates in her journal with hearty relish how the guard, patrolling his lonely round, speculated as to the identity of the unknown prisoner, and, finding the problem beyond his powers of solution, submitted it to his messmates. The soldiers told the servants,

the page the maid of honour, and all made nightly excursions to the secluded path to see the stranger's shadow pass and repossess the lighted expanse of the window-pane, in company (O shame and horror!) with the shadow of the Grande Mademoiselle, whom the maid of honour had but just curtained to rest in her own stately bedchamber on the other side of the castle.

Who could her companion be? Was he Charles II. of England, supposed to be fighting for his crown on the other side of the Channel? Or was he the Prince de Condé, exiled since the Fronde, and thought to have taken refuge in Spain? Both were known to have been in love with Mademoiselle; was she, perhaps, not so unpitying as she had seemed? The action of the shadows was hardly that of lovers. What were they doing in that stealthy way?

Jacques Cœur had had charge of the royal mint. There was a furnace in the room. Were the Jacques Cœur dies there too, and was Mademoiselle coining counterfeit money? Or was she experimenting in the black art with some necromancer or alchemist? These were the questions which perplexed her courtiers, and which Mademoiselle answers in her

journal, written in great part here in her favourite château of Saint Fargeau. Here, above all other places, one should read it, seated in the park which she beautified, and which is still unsurpassed by that of any of the minor castles of France. It is a journal remarkable for its frankness and its prolixity, giving to all whose sympathies are sufficiently acute to read between the lines a complete confession of the impulses of her wilful, vainglorious soul, as well as the strange adventures of her surprising life.

NOTE.—Chiefly in this original MS. Journal, preserved in the Bibliothèque National in Paris, the old palace of Cardinal Mazarin, where much of the action of the story took place, the author has followed the romantic relations of the Grande Mademoiselle with Prince Charles. It is the very insistence with which she reiterates her denial that she ever loved him that makes us certain that she did; while the doting fondness with which even in later years she dwells on every scanty expression of his affection, magnifying the significance of the most trivial compliments, tells the same tale. Rum-maging among the old books of the British Museum, a rare little volume was unearthed which pointed the way to collateral information regarding the Prince's continental career. Its title was in itself a chapter of history—the very chapter needed to fill out the discreet silences of Mademoiselle, for it read as follows:

England's Triumph; a more exact History of his Majesty's escape after the battle of Worcester with a Chronological Discourse of his Straits and dangerous adventures into France and his Removes from place to place till his return into England to this present,—September 1660.

Printed by J. G. Sold at the Angel in Cornhill.

II

THE FÊTE AT THE PALAIS CARDINAL

THE great Cardinal Mazarin could not believe his ears.

"Mademoiselle will *not!*" he repeated. "Mademoiselle has the audacity to send me word that she will not come to my festival except on her own conditions?"

"Precisely," replied the Queen Regent, Anne of Austria. "I fear my niece hath a headstrong will too long indulged, and that possibly it is now too late to coerce her."

The Cardinal tapped the arm of his chair impatiently. "I think not," he replied; "a little girl in her teens."

"She is twenty," replied the Queen; "no longer a child, but a woman."

"Is it possible? How fast these children grow! And the conditions on which the princess will accept my invitation are——?"

"That she open the festival by dancing with the King."

"A well-assorted couple, since he is scarcely nine!"

"So I told her. I tried to impress upon her that it was much more suitable that Louis should dance with one of your little nieces who is nearer his own age, and that the

Prince de Condé, who is twenty-six, were a more eligible partner for a young woman of her years, while all would envy her the honour of dancing with the victor of Rocroi."

"And she?"

"Assured me that among persons of her quality age was never considered of such importance as rank; and as she had long since determined that she would never demean herself by marrying with any save a king, neither would she dance with a partner beneath her pretensions."

"Ah!" exclaimed the Cardinal. "It is more serious than I thought. She has not forgotten."

"No; and she will never marry Prince Charles of England as you wish——"

"*I wish, your Majesty? Let us not whisper that clause even to each other, and possibly Mademoiselle may fancy that it is *her* wish. As you say, she must not be coerced, and under the circumstances we will write her that her suggestion seems not only fitting, but that no partner for the young king could have been named who would have been more acceptable to your Majesty and myself.*"

Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans, Duchesse de Montpensier, the young princess who had

dared dictate terms to Cardinal Mazarin, was châtelaine of the old castle of Saint Fargeau, and not of this château alone, but of many another, for her mother, Maire de Bourbon Montpensier, dying at her birth (May 29, 1627), had left her, besides the sovereignty of Dombes, the principality of Roche sur Yon, the duchies of Montpensier, of Chatellerault, and of Eu, together with several marquises, countships, and baronies, with all their great houses and domains.

Her father was Gaston d'Orléans, son of Henri IV. and Marie de Médicis, and younger brother of Louis XIII. Though he married a second time, the Grande Mademoiselle, as his oldest daughter, was presumptive heiress to a large share of his duchies of Orléans and of Chartres, his countship of Blois, his Paris residence—the palace of the Luxembourg (left him by his mother, Marie de Médicis), with other of his estates, properties, dignities, and privileges.

As was suitable to her rank, apartments were assigned to her and to her suite in the royal palace of the Tuileries; and the Queen, Anne of Austria, virtually adopted the motherless child.

With her present annual revenues of five

hundred thousand livres and her greater expectations, the little princess was the richest heiress in Europe, and no pains were spared to impress her with her own magnificence. Adulation and servility fell on responsive soil, and the Grande Mademoiselle grew up the proudest daughter of the proudest race in France, proud—(not of her wealth or that the most magnificent of kings, Louis XIV., was her own cousin, for she considered herself fully his equal but)—of her double descent from the Bourbons.

Wishing to remind her father of her importance, she wrote him: "Pour une demoiselle qui est Bourbon de tous les cotés (c'est assez dire) la douceur et la tendresse gagnent plus que les rigeurs." Bred in and in by the frequent intermarriage of her ancestors, the Bourbon arrogance was concentrated in her character, and stimulated her to make her life magnificent by some sublime achievement. She would prove her kinship to the Grand Monarque and the Grand Condé by becoming the Grande Mademoiselle, and all her life became a drama glorified by theatrical false lights. When her father reproached her with desiring to play the heroine, she replied: "I do not know what it is to be a heroine. I

am so constituted that I *must* carry out honourably whatever I undertake."

Gaston himself was not so constituted: a connoisseur in art, vivacious in conversation, charming to those who knew him only superficially, he had not an atom of moral sense. Without the strength of character to keep out of plots, he was an arrant coward, and invariably deserted his party at the critical moment. Their utter incongruity of character was early understood by both father and daughter, and the girl grew up lonely in the midst of her magnificent establishment at the Tuileries. She was eleven years old when the Dauphin, who was to be Louis XIV., was born. Childlike, she took the greatest interest in the baby. "He was a new occupation for me," she writes; "a doll that I was never weary of caressing."

Very soon a new idea took shape in the precocious little brain. She had been told that her hand would be sought by the crowned heads of Europe, and that some day she would surely be a queen. What more natural? Had not her grandmother, Marie de Médicis, been Queen of France? Had she not three aunts who were queens?—her aunt, Elizabeth, the wife of Philip IV. of Spain; her aunt, Henri-

etta Maria, consort of Charles I. of England; and the widow of her uncle, Louis XIII.,—the dear aunt Anne,—was Dowager Queen of France.

But she early determined that she would never quit her native land to be queen of any barbarous country like Germany or England. France pleased her well, and this infant was destined to be King of France. When he mounted his throne she would marry him, and be Queen of France like her grandmother and her aunt Anne. From that time she called the baby "*Mon petit mari*," and the Queen kissed her and said, "It may be." Others smiled, but encouraged her in the fancy, saying that the difference of age did not signify, for royalty married according to station and for no other consideration.

One day Cardinal Richelieu heard her speak of the Dauphin as her little husband, and he took her roundly to task, saying that it was highly improper for a demoiselle to concern herself with marriage until provided with a husband by those to whom Providence had entrusted her destiny. So the child was abashed and apparently forgot the rôle which she had imagined for herself; but because the play was forbidden it became all the more

attractive, and as the baby grew into a charming little boy she would whisper to him, "*N'oublie pas que tu es mon 'tit mari!*" And Louis would nod with the grave importance of possessing a secret, and echo the words—"*Ton 'tit mari.*"

Events were transpiring whose grave political importance the little maid was far from comprehending. Louis XIII. and his great minister, Cardinal Richelieu, had passed away, and the *grands seigneurs* took heart, hoping for a return of their old privileges. They were doomed to bitter disappointment; the Regent, Anne of Austria, chose as her minister Cardinal Mazarin, who exactly continued the policy of Richelieu. Shrewd in planning, bold and indefatigable in execution, the nobles soon realised that they had to do with a formidable enemy, who would be invariably supported by the Queen Mother during the minority of the young king.

Mademoiselle was to lose her little playmate, for Richelieu had bequeathed his Palais Cardinal to the King. It was hereafter to be known as the Palais Royal, and as it was far more convenient and even more luxurious in its more modern equipment than the old Louvre, Anne of Austria removed the royal

household to the new palace, whose shop-lined arcades now give so poor an idea of its old glories.

Cardinal Mazarin at the same time purchased the tract of land embraced between the Rues Vivienne and Richelieu, and extending from the Palais Royal to the fortifications. Here he had just erected a new Palais Cardinal, or Palais Mazarin (now the Bibliothèque National), which became the real centre of government, and not of political supremacy alone, but the mainspring of the intricate clockwork which strove to move as puppets all the personages of the period. The little princess felt the controlling impulse of the coiled steel, and responded to it with frank revolt. She would not be managed. She was no *marionnette* to be manipulated by the Cardinal when her will clashed with his, and she defied him with the insolence of inexperience.

The point at issue was of slight importance, but each understood that more lay beneath it than appeared.

"I have carried my point," thought the high-spirited girl, as she read Mazarin's gracious concession to her imperious demands. "How much more agreeable he is than my

father, with whom I always quarrel! Others dare not offend the Cardinal, while he dares not thwart me. That means either that he is contemptibly weak or that I am really of importance. In either case, when the time comes for my establishment in life, he will do exactly as I wish."

Meantime Mazarin reflected: "She has not forgotten her foolish ambition to be Queen of France. It cannot be, for the King's marriage must gain us the alliance of one of the chief European powers. Mademoiselle, too, should be a link between France and some other nation. If she could be persuaded to wait quietly, I might arrange a great marriage for her. But no,—she has shown her hand. She intends to make herself the Queen of Louis XIV., and she must be out of the way before the King's majority brings that question to the point." His head rested thoughtfully upon his hand for a few moments; then suddenly an inscrutable smile swept across the firm mouth. "I have it!" he said; "but I shall have to invent a very delicate mechanism if she is to dance as I wish. Nevertheless, dance she shall."

Mademoiselle hastened with her response from the Cardinal to tell her chief confidante,

her aunt Henrietta, of her victory. She was sure in advance of her admiration and sympathy, for the exiled queen of Charles I. of England was tenderly attached to her wilful niece. They had been drawn to each other at first by the chance of mere proximity and loneliness; for Henrietta Maria, seeking refuge in her native land at the time of the distractions in England, which were soon to culminate in the death of her husband upon the scaffold, had been assigned the apartment in the Louvre recently vacated by Anne of Austria. The long river gallery between it and the apartment of Mademoiselle (in the Pavillon de l'Horloge) was frequently trodden by them both, for a deep affection presently developed between them. The Princess not only missed the companionship of the Queen Mother since her removal to the Palais Royal, but she had noticed a growing coolness in her, and she gave herself gratefully to the mothering of her more unfortunate aunt. Henrietta Maria at once set her heart upon effecting a marriage between the young heiress and her son, later to be known to the world as Charles II. of England; and she laboured to bring it about with all a mother's genius for matchmaking. She had been

frustrated in her hope of obtaining help for her husband in France by the Cardinal's unwillingness to espouse a losing cause; and she was greatly surprised at receiving an invitation to the Cardinal's *fête*, with one for the Prince of Wales, then in Holland with his brother-in-law, the Prince of Orange.

Charles was to be allowed to come to France, and the mother's heart built many a groundless hope on this permission. She was encouraged by Anne of Austria, who assured her that Mazarin highly approved of Prince Charles as a *parti* for Mademoiselle de Montpensier, though it would be well for the present not to let this appear, as Mademoiselle was a young person who would make her own choice. They would both do all in their power to bring about the marriage, and she suggested a trip to Compiègne to meet the Prince, and a residence for a short time at this beautiful chateau, whose magnificent forest would give opportunity for hunting parties, walks, and out-of-door amusements so favourable to an acquaintance between young people.

The fond mother was overjoyed, the Prince sent for post-haste, and the Queen of France drove up to the Louvre in her state carriage to convey her dear sister-in-law and niece to

Compiègne. Never had two young people more encouragement in falling in love, never, apparently, had interested matchmakers such poor success. Charles and Mademoiselle wandered all day together in the beautiful park and talked of nothing but dogs, falcons, and sport, for the young man was scarcely seventeen and had not yet developed the extraordinary aptitude for love-making for which he afterward became famous. From Compiègne the Prince accompanied his mother and Mademoiselle to the Louvre. The French Court had never been gayer than in this season of 1647, and there were continual festivities at the Palais Royal. The Cardinal had not before thrown open the wonders of his palace,—he had a reason for doing so now, for, keeping as he did his finger on the pulse of public opinion, he had felt the growing hatred of the nobility and was making a supreme effort to cajole them by lavish munificence.

Mademoiselle attended all the festivals of that season and assures us that the Cardinal's far surpassed them all. The brilliant company that strolled through the long galleries could not fail to be impressed with the magnificence of the minister, for never before had such treasures of art been displayed in France.

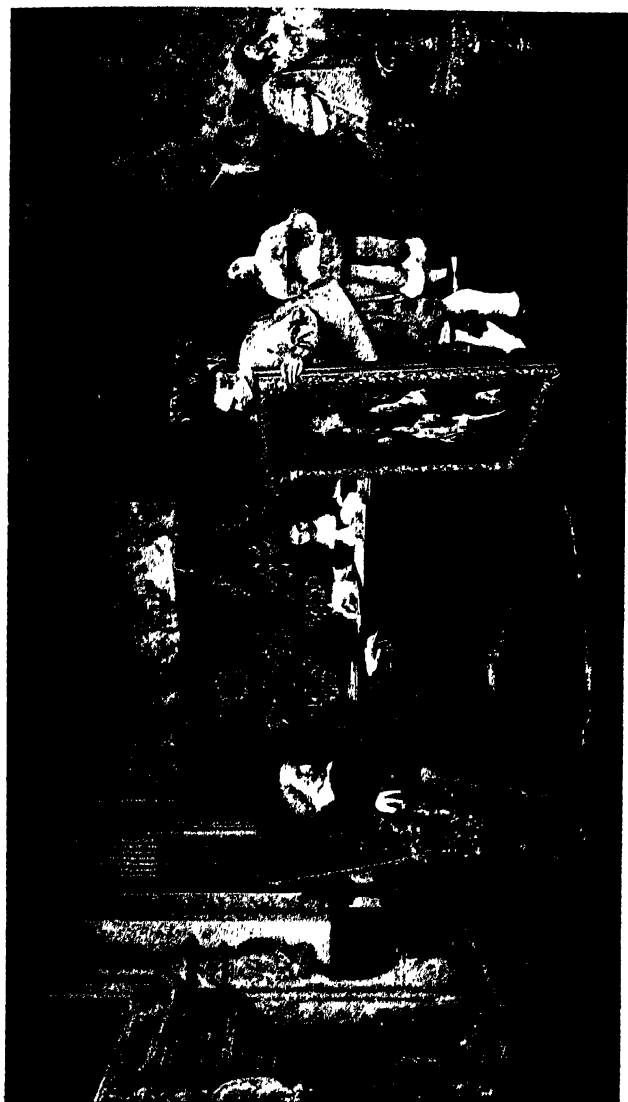


The Châtelaine of Saint Fargeau

to be sent him secretly, with a letter bidding him note that on such a night trusty friends would wait with horses at the foot of the castle wall. But the Duc de Lauzun showed Mademoiselle the letter and the window-bars unfiled, protesting that he cared not for liberty without her. It was well for him that he so made his choice. The rope-ladder was yards too short, and he would have dropped to certain death even had he not been killed by his fall, for the men waiting for him were Mademoiselle's own guards, with orders to despatch any escaping prisoner.

“An ungentle way to treat a husband, you may well say! but if Madame will study our portrait of Mademoiselle she will remark in her features a decision of character which might well make a false lover tremble.

“The gaillard duke was a sly dog. I am not sure but he recognised the handwriting of the letter and guessed what fate awaited him if he did not feign devotion. When I look at his impudent, handsome face, on the other side of the mantel from Mademoiselle, I do not wonder that he was capable of saying to her at last, ‘You are a proud woman, Mademoiselle de Montpensier; you fancy yourself mistress of Saint Fargeau, but, after all. I



The Cardinal's agents had collected the paintings, sculpture, bric-à-brac, books, medals, gems from every country of Europe, and from the Orient as well. There were hundreds of precious canvases by the greatest masters of all schools, and on the sale of the paintings owned by King Charles I. during the Commonwealth, Mazarin added them to his treasures. He was richest in Italian art, and of all its masterpieces he had set his heart most on acquiring Correggio's *Marriage of the Infant Jesus and Saint Catherine*, perhaps because the painting was owned by an old rival in ecclesiastical dignity, Cardinal Barberini, papal envoy to France, who had boasted that it should never come into the possession of Mazarin. But Anne of Austria hinted to the nuncio that the young king was desirous of owning it, Barberini was forced to present it to Louis, and the coveted picture was, of course, immediately transferred to Mazarin.

The furniture of the Cardinal's palace was as princely as his collections. His bed was of carved ivory, and his table and toilet services massive gold. His library held forty thousand books. The frescos of the vaulting, mosaics of the pavement, and fifty great tapestries left no scrap of ceiling, floor, or wall which

was not a marvel of ornament. The courtiers were dazzled, but consumed with envy. They hated Mazarin for this parade of his wealth, but to Mademoiselle and to Prince Charles he seemed the most amiable of men.

The chief feature of his great *fête* was a lottery in which there were no blanks, in which Mademoiselle was awarded a diamond valued at four thousand francs. The prizes were distributed so impartially that the *grand lot* of the evening, a jewel valued at many pounds, fell to a simple lieutenant. Prince Charles received a handsomer sword than he possessed, and Queen Henrietta a purse of gold pieces which she knew only too well how to use. Besides bestowing these substantial gifts, the Cardinal encouraged the trembling Queen of England, flattered Mademoiselle, and was most suave and urbane in his conversation with the Prince, and the three returned to the Louvre to sing his praises.

Another evening, Anne of Austria gave a ball at the Palais Royal, and Henrietta Maria lent her niece all her jewels for the occasion, Prince Charles holding the candelabra while his mother fastened the gems with trembling fingers. Mademoiselle exclaimed at their beauty, and the unfortunate queen lamented

that it was not in her power to deck her with the crown jewels which she had worn as Queen of England. .

"My cousin, you shall wear them some day, if so it please you," Charles whispered, with a swift admiring glance.

Mademoiselle did not reply, and the mother's heart gave a bound. Charles had hitherto been provokingly silent. He spoke French with difficulty, but his mother was not contented with that excuse. Love can always find its way, and she had feared that Charles was not attracted by his proud cousin. "He loves her," she said to herself, "and she can never resist my handsome boy if he is in earnest."

But the events of that evening seemed to prove that the mother was wrong, and that they were good comrades and nothing more.

For Mademoiselle this *fête* was a memorable occasion. The entertainment of the evening consisted in the performance of the opera of *Orpheus*. There was a throne upon the stage, and after the opera was over Mademoiselle seated herself upon it, her cousins Charles and Louis placing themselves on either hand. It was a moment of intense delight to the proud princess—playing the queen, with the future

kings of England and of France at her feet. She felt that others recognised the significance of the little tableau, and she enjoyed the display of her importance with no mixture of coquetry or regard for the melancholy prince who gazed after her with such gloom, as the fascinating little lad—Louis—led her out to dance.

The next day the Court Journal expressed its admiration of the spectacle of the young king's attention to his tall cousin—"One would have said Cupid dancing with one of the Graces," and Anne of Austria pointed out the paragraph to the Cardinal, remarking, "This is most unfortunate. It will be oil to the flame of her ambition. Confess that you have failed, and that the girl has no heart."

"She has an imagination which will do for the present, and the end is not yet."

"An imagination filled with romantic notions of winning a crown in spite of opposition," the Queen Mother retorted.

"I grant you; and that problem will be placed before Charles shortly. If Mademoiselle desires romance and opposition, he can offer it to her *ad libitum*."

The Queen shook her head, while a smile of contempt curled her lips. "He is a poor

creature, with not enough spirit to take his own part. Such a weakling can never fill my niece's ideal of a hero."

"Nay, your Majesty; a woman often recognises the qualities which a man lacks, and, striving to rouse them in him, succeeds, and falls in love with her own handiwork."

"But is there any chance for the royalist cause in England?"

The Cardinal spread his hands. "That does not concern us," he said, "and she has not sufficient judgment to foresee the impossibility."

"But she has advisers; her father——"

"It is sufficient for him to oppose a thing for her to desire it ardently. After all, the game appeals to all players more than the prize, and the more difficult the game the keener the interest. We have only to wait, and we shall not have to wait long."

Events marched more quickly than Mazarin had anticipated. He had done nothing to help Charles I., and on the 30th of January, 1649, that monarch laid his kingly head upon the block with such sublimity, dignity, and courage that he commanded the respect of his enemies.

It was Mademoiselle who comforted the

heart-broken Henrietta, for Prince Charles, king now in name and in all royalist hearts, was in Holland striving to persuade his brother-in-law to furnish him with a fleet for the invasion of Scotland.

"He will never succeed," Mademoiselle said, coldly, to the Cardinal. "Only imagine that he sent Parliament a blank sheet, signed with his name, begging them to grant the life of his father on their own conditions, even to his relinquishment of all pretensions to succeed him!"

There was only scorn in the girl's voice, for the greatness of this act entirely escaped her.

Anne of Austria spoke warmly. "Would that my son loved me as much! A man who is capable of self-sacrifice like that will not fail."

"You said he was only a stick," said little Hortense Mancini, the Cardinal's niece, "and that he had n't spirit enough to kiss a pretty girl, but he had. He kissed me many a time, and he used to chase me in the garden, and I like him. I am going to marry him and ride all over England with him, and we will kill all those bad Roundheads."

Every one gaped at the child's audacity except the Cardinal and Mademoiselle. A

quick gleam shot from the eye of the former, while Mademoiselle exclaimed angrily:

"You baby! go and play with your dolls!"

"There is no more difference between our ages than between yours and His Majesty King Louis's," the child retorted maliciously: "and people all say that it does n't signify how much older one's husband is, but it is ridiculous when he is younger."

"Go to your apartments!" said the Cardinal sternly; but a subtle smile played for an instant about his mouth.

It is incredible that Mazarin arranged this scene, but nothing could have pleased him better. It would give Mademoiselle matter for consideration, and now that the Fronde was closing about him he more than ever desired her absence from France. She would be a powerful adversary, and he foresaw the influences which the agitators of the Fronde would bring to bear upon her. He expressed his vexation that his niece should have spoken so foolishly. Charles was King of England, and not for such as she; and he assured Mademoiselle that the rebellion would be quickly settled if only the Prince were counselled to daring, brilliant action. There were princesses a plenty in Europe who would be glad

to share in his triumph. He must be thinking of a Spanish alliance,—that would not be at all unsuitable or impossible. The Cardinal thought he might be able to aid Charles in that quarter, but the immediate necessity was for him to join his partisans,—Ormond, who was fighting in Ireland; or Montrose, who was stirring up Scotland.

Mademoiselle listened greedily. Charles's cause was not so desperate, then, after all. And she returned to the Louvre to talk it all over with his devoted mother, who still occupied her stately but lonely quarters.

Henrietta Maria's lips quivered with a piti-ful smile as she listened to the girl's eager encouragement. "Thank God," she said, "you do care; and you can do anything with him. He is here; he has come for our advice,—yours as well as mine, for he loves you."

"I am not so sure of that," Mademoiselle replied.

"Then let *me* convince you," and Charles—more assured in manner, with more facility in the use of the French language, more of skill in the art of love-making—was at her side. He had grown handsomer as well as older, a soft moustache masked the weak mouth, his figure

—always elegant—was more wiry and muscular, and the eloquent eyes had lost none of their charm. He besieged her with all the ardour of a Stuart, and even Mademoiselle's cold nature was not proof against his irresistible attractiveness. Her heart swelled like an expanding flower at his passionate pleading. She could not understand her own feelings, —why she listened for his step in the long corridor and heard it before her keen-eared spaniel; why, when his hand touched her arm, a thrill shot through her, filling her with warmth and happiness. They were both fond of music, and Mademoiselle had a string band of her own,—six violinists who played for her dances, and in her garden when there were no guests. Why was it that, as she sat upon the balcony with Charles and his mother and listened to them, the music seemed to take to itself articulate words—his words—and repeat to her all that he had ever said?

But she influenced him even more than he did her. The Cardinal's prediction was fulfilled, and while she was blossoming from a crude, somewhat masculine girl, into a woman, she was making a man of him.

"I have always loved you," he declared one night. "I used to stand by your chair

speechless from intensity of feeling. I cannot express myself now, but I will devote myself to you all my life. I will give up the struggle for my crown. The Scots have offered me their allegiance, and, if I would go to them, would invade England with me; but they are a set of canting Presbyterians with whom I have no sympathy, and the result is doubtful. It is no sacrifice, for I have no longing for ruling. You need never leave France, for my throne is nothing to me in comparison with your love."

But that word woke Mademoiselle, and she told him that if she consented to marry him it would be in the hope of helping him gain his kingdom, and that he must take immediate command of his army and lead it to victory.

"You talk," he said, "as though victory were certain."

"The Cardinal thinks so."

"But he advised me to remain here for the present. You cannot love me if you make my being a king the condition of our marriage, or if you really wish me to leave you. Tell me to stay, Sweet, until I can take you with me."

The girl flushed deeply. "It may be that

I do not love you," she said, "and that I never will,—that will depend upon yourself. I only know that I could never love a king whose kingdom had been gained by the death of subjects whose peril he had not been man enough to share, and that I would rather go with you to danger, to widowhood, and to my own death than be the wife of a coward."

That shaft went home. He bowed, walked to the door, then turning, said with dignity: "When I come again, Mademoiselle, there will be no possibility for that term to be applied to me,—for it will be to demand your hand as the King of Great Britain."

The girl's eyes glowed. "Then let me go with you now," she said.

He was at her feet in an instant. "Would you fight with me, *ma mie?*"

"Most gladly."

"Fighting is not pretty business for a lady."

"Joan of Arc——"

"Yes; but this is a different age, and Englishmen fight for their sweethearts without their help. Your father would not give you to me with my present prospects, nor shall I make the demand until I have more convincing arguments."

Her arms were around his neck. "And

when you make it, Charles, though all the world oppose, you shall be satisfied with my answer."

III

BESIDE THE MEDICI FOUNTAIN

MAZARIN glowered at Henrietta Maria as she concluded her report of Charles's departure and his secret betrothal with Mademoiselle, and his clenched hand struck a blow upon the table before him as he exclaimed, "The marriage will never take place."

"But I thought you favoured it!" the astonished woman replied, weakly. "I thought that you believed it possible."

"Charles should have remained here until it was so."

"But they love each other."

"Then he should have married her."

"One does not elope with a princess of the blood, and the Duke of Orléans would not have given his permission."

"Do you fancy that he ever will? That I do not know what plots are being hatched at the Luxembourg, with the design of compelling me to consent to Mademoiselle's betrothal to the King of France?"

"Mademoiselle will never consent. You do

not know her,—that was only a childish fancy, and she loves my son.”

“Then why did not the fools think of a private marriage? Gaston d’Orléans might then have protested to his heart’s content.”

Henrietta Maria was silent. She could not say that such a thought could not have occurred to the lovers, that it was beneath their honour and dignity, for it was more than whispered that Mazarin and Anne of Austria were secretly married, and this might easily have been, for, by a strange anomaly, Mazarin, although a cardinal, was not a priest. He could not celebrate mass, and he was not bound by the vow of celibacy. His Italian confessor and chaplain could easily have performed the ceremony.¹

Queen Henrietta left the Cardinal depressed and perplexed. She could not understand all the reasons for Mazarin’s displeasure. As he had grown richer he had become more unpopular. The air had long been stifling, as before a thunderstorm which must soon burst, with results which no one could calculate. France had begun to think, and recognised the source

¹ Mazarin’s letters, written in cipher, have been unriddled, and prove the intense love which bound them to each other. See *Problèmes d’Histoire*, by Jules Loiseleur; and the *Letters of Cardinal Mazarin*.

of all this magnificence. The country groaned under a system of extortionate taxation, which the Parliament vainly endeavoured to control. Had it succeeded, a limited monarchy like that of England might have been established, and the Revolution never have taken place.

But, unfortunately for France, the Fronde was not a united movement. People, Parliament, and nobility were working at cross-purposes,—a labyrinth of diverse interests, cabals, and intrigues which for a time Mazarin was able to pit against each other. The first demonstration was a popular one, which the Cardinal tricked with pretended concessions. But his success had made him overconfident. He realised the rooted enmity of the nobles, but not that this unsuccessful effort of the people had shown the seigneurs that the populace was a power which might be utilised to advance their own interests. The Duke of Orléans characteristically pursued a double-faced policy. Mademoiselle, who had followed the sittings of Parliament, attended the secret meetings of the leaders of the rebellion at her father's palace of the Luxembourg; but Gaston could not be induced to take the head of the movement until an event occurred which

made feasible the desire of the nobles for the exile of Mazarin.

The Prince de Condé, more open than the other conspirators in defying the minister, was arrested with his brother and the Prince de Longueville, and imprisoned at Havre. It was Mazarin's second mistake and the signal for renewed activity on the part of the Fronde. The nobles could disregard the Cardinal's arrest of members of Parliament, but they could not pass unnoticed a menace to their own order. The Parliament, too, boldly questioned Mazarin's right to imprison the Princes, and the second and stronger Fronde, secretly formed by a union of the nobility and the people, perfected its organisation.

The Cardinal soon saw the impossibility of stemming the tide and voluntarily sought exile at the château of Brühl, near Cologne. Anne of Austria and Louis XIV. remained for a short time in Paris, virtually prisoners. But to escape from the hands of Parliament and the Fronde, they shortly after removed the Court to Touraine.

Mademoiselle remained in Paris, but though perfectly informed of the pending revolution, and lacking neither courage nor sympathy with the maintenance of the rights of the

nobility, still hesitated to take an active part in the conspiracy, for she had not forgotten that her interests would sooner or later be withdrawn from France, and she had as yet no enmity for the Cardinal. For his nieces, however, she felt an unreasoning and increasing dislike. This bevy of dark-eyed Italian beauties—the Demoiselles Mancini and Martinozzi, daughters of Mazarin's two sisters—had long absorbed the motherly kindness which Anne of Austria had in years past lavished upon Mademoiselle; but her prejudice was founded in something more than this jealousy. It was understood that the Queen-Mother had persuaded the Cardinal to send to Italy for them and to allow them to share the instruction given the young king, with whom they were brought up in the utmost intimacy. The Cardinal himself affected an indifference for their establishment, whereas he had brought them to France with the secret purpose of strengthening his own position by means of their marriage with the most powerful nobles.

Marshal de Villeroy had remarked on their arrival: "There are some young misses who are not at all rich, but who will soon possess the finest châteaux, the most ample incomes,

the most magnificent jewels,—possibly the noblest titles in France and in Europe.” Future events were to prove that the Marshal had read the fortunes of the Cardinal’s nieces correctly. They were pawns upon the chess-board, but by his adroit playing were soon to have the power of queens. Olympe Mancini had exercised a remarkable influence on the young Louis, acting with him habitually in all the amateur theatricals of which the King was so fond, and even teaching him to read the Italian poets; but it was Marie, who was nearer his own age, who really touched his heart. Captious observers had noted the fondness of the young people for each other’s society, and something of their gossip had been reported to Mazarin before his departure. To silence it, possibly foreseeing a time when he could not protect them, he removed his nieces to the convent of Val de Grace, whose church, designed by Francis Mansard for Anne of Austria, had been lately finished. The convent was under her special protection, and the apartment occupied by her when in religious retreat (and so rudely searched by Richelieu during her early unhappy married life) was now assigned to the nieces of the Cardinal and their governess.

Mademoiselle noted their removal from the Palais Royal with satisfaction. "Swarm of little hornets," she said to herself, "your nest has been dislodged from the palace eaves. You may soon have to fly still farther." The proud princess was yet to learn that before flying the hornets could sting. She regarded them no more than so many insects now, for her heart and Henrietta Maria's were full of intense anxiety. The news from England had not been encouraging. Cromwell was marching to meet the Scots, and none but Charles's most devoted friends doubted the result. But he had written them gaily, confidently, on the eve of the battle of Worcester; and his mother and Mademoiselle hoped against hope, until the news came of the overwhelming defeat and utter rout of the royalists. The battle had been fought on the 3rd of September, 1651, and since then not a word had been heard from Charles. All the reports had come from the victors. Thirty-four thousand Roundheads had cut to pieces Charles's army of thirteen or fourteen thousand, and yet Cromwell had reported it "as stiff a contest as ever I have seen."

The King had striven to rally his followers, crying, "I would rather you would shoot me

than to see the end of this fatal day." But forty devoted Cavaliers had cut a passage through the enemy and had carried him off, against his will, whither no one knew.

"Thank God!" Mademoiselle exclaimed, "he has proved himself a hero!"

Unable to bear the heavy days of anxiety, Mademoiselle proposed to the distracted mother that they should make a short excursion to her château of Eu, near Le Treport, on the Normandy coast. Here they might obtain news, and the people of the town had orders to interrogate every chance comer. Thus it chanced that two suspicious-looking persons, seen to be landed by a fishing-smack at a little inlet and refused lodging at the inn, were taken by the local guard to the château. Mademoiselle entered the great hall to find Henrietta Maria in the arms of the younger, whom but for this demonstration she would not have recognised as her lover. But as she looked more closely, she was obliged to confess that, in spite of the dark stain of the walnut-juice, the absence of the Cavalier 'love-locks,' and the rough clothing of a common sailor, this fine, manly fellow was handsomer and infinitely more captivating than any Charles she had previously known

They brought him back to Paris in triumph.

His adventures had been wild enough, and they lost nothing in the telling. Mademoiselle was never weary of listening to them, and would sit late in her aunt's apartment, and walk slowly back to the Tuileries, escorted by Charles, through the long gallery which their grandfather had built, while he pursued the same inexhaustible themes—the battle of Worcester, the flight with his fifty devoted gentlemen, his parting from them, and concealment in the "Priest's Hole" of his friend's castle; the adventures in the wood of Boscobel, his night in "the royal oak," and other nights in peasants' huts.

Mademoiselle liked least the episode of his long ride disguised as Miss Jane Lane's serving-man, and failed to find diverting Charles's animated description of his awkwardness in cleaning her shoes. The loyalty of his subjects touched her deeply,—that though a price of a thousand pounds had been put upon his head and he had been recognised by at least forty-five persons, many of whom were miserably poor, he yet had wandered for forty-two days unbetrayed, seemed to her sublime.

In spite of the affection of his subjects, he had none for them.

"Imagine, sweetheart, that those ranting, canting Scots are so bigoted that they think it a sin to play the fiddle. Truly, when I lost my kingdom I was consoled by the thought that I would hear good music again in France. You must have your violins play our favourite tunes, and that precocious page of yours—Lulli—must play that *motet* of the falling rose-leaves. Do they dance at the Palais Royal now? That bewitching little Mancini must have grown a sizable girl. Is she as pretty as she promised?"

"You shall dance with me, Charles," the Princess replied; "for my receptions have taken the place of the Queen-Mother's. All the young nobility of Paris flock to my assemblies. My father likes to have my salon the social centre. You shall meet the Grand Condé,—he is the idol of the hour, more popular than when he first won the victory of Rocroi."

Mademoiselle, though charmed by his gay *insouciance*, was vaguely dissatisfied. He took defeat too easily, and she was not even now ready to accept it as final. "I cannot bear to see you dancing triolets in my salon,"

she said to him, "when you ought to be moving heaven and earth to enlist the European powers in your favour."

"I have given up that struggle," he replied; "your love is enough for me. I fought my best because you would have it so, and failed, for you were not with me and my heart was here. Now I will do nothing further unless you will marry me. If you will consent to that, I will do whatever you wish."

"If that be true," Mademoiselle replied, "you may demand me of my father, and we will establish ourselves at my château of Eu, ready when the moment comes to invade England together." She unfolded all her plans for conquest as soon as the issue of the Fronde was decided. No matter which party triumphed, it should aid him, for she had influence with both sides.

So Charles presented himself at the Luxembourg and asked Gaston d'Orléans for the hand of his daughter. The request was made at an evil moment. At any other time Gaston might have accepted the proposal with alacrity, for he had no great love for his agitating daughter, and it would have been a relief to have been disembarrassed by her removal to a foreign country; but now all his ambitious

schemes circled around one pivot—her marriage to Louis XIV.

When Gaston had committed himself to the Fronde he had demanded what advantage would be his even if Mazarin were banished. "You shall be father of the future queen," the leaders replied. "Louis is now fourteen years of age; we will insist upon his marriage with Mademoiselle de Montpensier."

So the Duke of Orléans made a diplomatic reply to Charles. He was flattered by the offer, but it was not in his power to dispose of his daughter's hand. Her future was a matter which concerned the policy of the kingdom and must be referred to the King; nevertheless, he would labour to obtain his approval.

Mademoiselle was delighted with this hypocritical reply. She believed it equivalent to consent, for Louis would surely take his cue from his mother and from the Cardinal, with whom he was known to be in correspondence. She wrote to Anne of Austria and, without waiting for her answer, hurried to her father to beg him to arrange at once for her marriage, only to be enlightened as to his intentions and much disturbed by certain possibilities which had not occurred to her.

Gaston forbade her engagement with Charles, striving to convince her of the stupendous folly of such a step, now that the critical moment of her life was approaching. "You will throw away the crown of France," he declared, "to allow a penniless adventurer, who has no chance of maintaining his pretensions to his kingdom, to squander your fortune. That is all he wishes. You are a fool to think that he cares for you. It is an open secret that he is in love with Mademoiselle de Mancini.

Instantly Mademoiselle took fire. She did not believe a word that her father had said, least of all, the final allegation. She would marry the man of her choice in spite of every obstacle, and she quitted her father indignantly.

Charles was to have met her in the great gallery which Rubens decorated for their regal grandmother, Marie de Médicis. He was late and she paced it impatiently, glancing at the glories of her proud ancestors,—the forceful, kingly face of Henri of Navarre and the sumptuous state apartments of his queen. "We will be more glorious still," she said to herself, "for Charles shall win his kingdom, his straits are not more desperate than were

Henri IV.'s, and we will reign as never monarchs reigned before."

There was a step behind her and a discreet cough, and, turning, she saw that she had been followed by her father's chaplain, Armand Le Bouthillier, better known at this day as the Abbé Rancé. He was no sour anchorite, but an engaging young man, thoroughly in sympathy with the world, and at this time too much in love with it, but with a sensitive heart, which would one day demand stern penance for his youthful errors. Mademoiselle had always liked him for his frank friendliness. She trusted him, and he never proved himself unworthy of confidence. He had been present at the interview with her father, and now lamented the misunderstanding between Gaston and his daughter.

"We understand each other too well, Monsieur," Mademoiselle replied bitterly, "and that is why there is no love lost between us."

"Perhaps you are right," the Abbé replied, gravely. "Disillusion comes with too much knowledge; possibly that is the reason you have made a hero of your cousin of England."

Mademoiselle gave him a scornful look. "You, too!" it said; then something of significance and of respectful pity in his face

impressed her. She came quite close. "Do you know any reason why I should not love Charles?" she demanded. "On your soul, I ask it."

He took her hands in his. "On my soul, Mademoiselle, he is not worthy of you."

"I do not believe you."

"Will you believe your own eyes and ears?"

"What do you mean? You have implied too much not to tell all the truth."

"You know that the Duke of Mercœur is in love with Laure Mancini?"

"All Paris knows it. If it were not for Laure Mancini, Mercœur would have joined the Fronde. But what has that to do with Charles?"

She trembled as she spoke, for she was aware of the close friendship which existed between the two young men.

"Only this, that Mercœur has found means to bribe the coachman who takes the Cardinal's nieces to drive each afternoon to leave his lady for an hour with him at Renard's Garden. She is masked, of course, but they have been watched and their identity proved. Their interview is innocent enough, merely lovers' babble over a luncheon in the shrubbery; but it would compromise Mademoiselle

Mancini, were it not known that they are betrothed and that Mercœur is an honourable man."

"What you say is utterly impossible. The Cardinal before he left asked my aunt Henrietta to take his nieces to drive in her own carriage, as his own might be insulted by the mob. My aunt is incorruptible and feels her responsibility."

"That may be, and yet all that I say is true. Has your aunt called personally for the young ladies since Charles's return?"

"Until last week, when she was taken ill, and she has not since been for them at all."

"My duties have taken me often of late to Val de Grace. No announcement of her illness has been received by the Superior of the convent. The carriage of the Queen of England calls daily, as usual, and for the past ten days two of the nieces—Mesdemoiselles Laure and Hortense—have taken the drive. I was standing in the church door as the equipage passed out of the gates last Thursday, and heard the girls' merry laughter. There was a third person in the coach, who had waited for them to come down. This person sat far back, but though the profile showed a woman's

bonnet, veiled, it bobbed about in such exaggerated fashion as the carriage passed me that my suspicions were aroused. My own *berline* was at the gate, and I followed the carriage. It drove to Renard's Garden, where the Duke of Mercœur was waiting, and assisted the elder of the two sisters to alight. Then the other two persons drove away. I entered the gardens and remained watching the first couple until they were called for by the others, when the young ladies were returned to the convent."

"And you would have me believe that Charles disguised himself as his mother in order to take part in this escapade?"

"I have proved it, Mademoiselle. The same performance, with slight variation, has taken place every afternoon, and I have not failed to be in attendance. Sometimes Charles has not been in the coach when it appeared at the convent door, and then the footman has presented the portress with a letter, apparently from Queen Henrietta, asking that the young ladies be allowed to spend the afternoon with her at the Louvre. That trick nearly wrecked everything, for the first time it was tried an instructress accompanied her charges to the palace door, where they were met by

Charles. Judge of his astonishment. But he was equal to the occasion. He received the two misses, assured their duenna that his mother was awaiting them with impatience, and ordered the coachman to take the instructress wherever she wished for an hour. He waited until the carriage was out of sight, and then escorted the Mancinis to Renard's Garden. He had them back in the porter's lodge at the palace when the chaperon returned, and she suspected nothing."

Mademoiselle's eyes glowed angrily. "And do you think that the work of a spy and a detective is worthy of your office, Monsieur l'Abbé?"

"Mademoiselle," said the other, gently, "I have known you since you were a baby. I taught you your Catechism and much else besides. I have heard your confessions. I know your noble heart, and nothing that will save you from unhappiness is too mean for me to do for you."

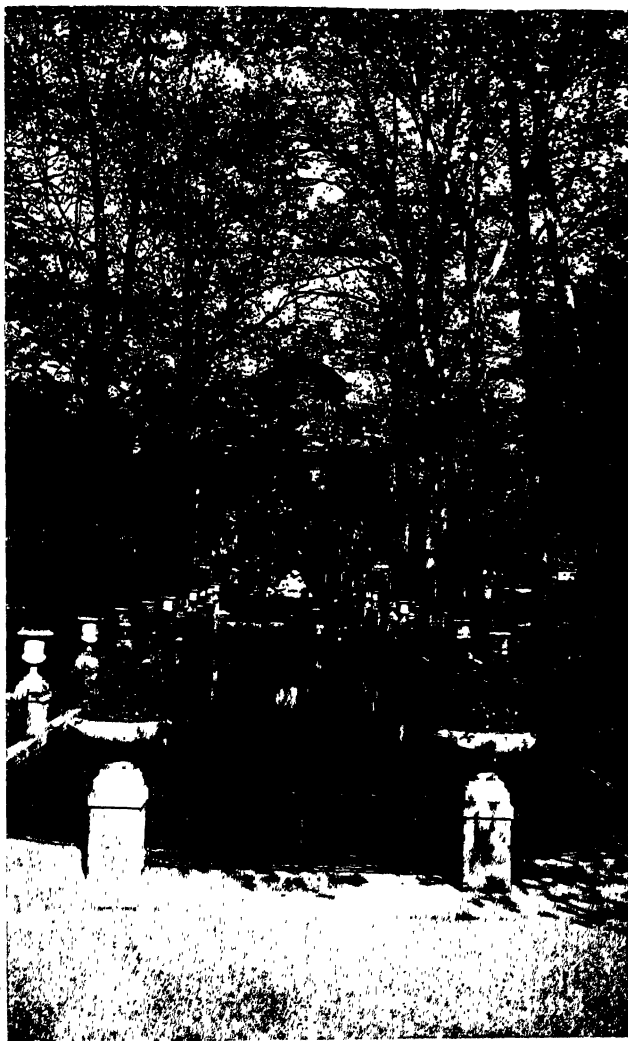
The girl's look softened. "I believe you, de Rancé; but my faith in truth and devotion is sadly shaken. And to-day—to-day, when he was to meet me here to know my father's final answer——"

"He intends to come. His valet is holding

his horse at the great *grille*. He is only an hour late. Would you know what has made him forget the appointment? He is not far away, for this afternoon it was the Duke of Mercœur and Laure Mancini who took the drive, leaving Prince Charles and Mademoiselle Hortense to stroll in this garden. The Duke of Mercœur has returned and is waiting with his sweetheart in the carriage at the little postern, which opens upon the avenue leading to the convent of Val de Grace. He is probably all impatience, for this tardiness of Charles makes them risk discovery. However, the demoiselles will not be punished, for they leave to-night to join the Cardinal in his exile. The lovers have some excuse, for they are bidding each other farewell in the shrubbery near the fountain. I saw them a moment ago from my window in the attic. Will you come with me through that little *allée* and meet them?"

"Yes," Mademoiselle gasped, in a stifled voice, "I will go. I cannot trust myself to speak to them, but I must see and hear,—I must *know*."

They passed to the back of the monumental fountain which Marie de Médicis constructed, and which has been for over three hundred



THE MEDICI FOUNTAIN, GARDEN OF THE LUXEMBOURG.

By permission of Neurdein Frères.

years the rendezvous for innumerable lovers. It was more retired then than now, and the young couple occupied a rustic seat in the shady bosquet so close to Mademoiselle that their every word was heard distinctly. Hortense had just asked the meaning of the statues in the principal niche, and Charles had told her the story of Galatea and her shepherd Acis surprised by the jealous Polyphemus, who broods over them like impending fate.

The girl shuddered and clung to him. "It seems like an evil omen," she said; "let us hurry away before the ugly giant crushes us as well."

"There is no evil fate that can separate us, dear Hortense," Charles protested, "and there is only an ugly ogress who wishes to do so. What a dog's life I have led, driven by her caprices, ordered heartlessly to battle as though she were my commanding officer! I can endure it no longer."

"Poor Mademoiselle! but does she not love you, Charles?"

"She? She does not know what it is to love. She is a mountain of absurd ambition and bombast. She a queen,—ridiculous! but you, my life, my angel, my only love——" and the eloquent Charles found no lack of words

to express the ardour of his passion, which was undoubtedly sincere, though evanescent.

Mademoiselle's fingers gripped the Abbé's arm, but he did not lead her away. Like a skilful surgeon, he felt that he must be cruel to save her, and he allowed the lancet to do its work.

"And you will surely join us at Brühl?" Hortense demanded.

"Surely, my life," he replied. "Mercœur and I will be there in less than a week after your arrival."

"If you could only escort us!" Hortense pleaded. "The Duke of Mercœur has promised Laure that he will be with us on the road to-night. We start, you know, at mid-night. Why wait a week?"

"By the Lord! it would be a merry adventure," Charles cried; "but I fear I can find no excuse for so sudden a departure. Sooner or later, come I will. Ha! Mercœur, what has brought you here? I do not spy on your interviews. Has anything happened?"

"Happened?—the sun has set, and we must take these ladies home. You are risking everything by this imprudence"; and the less heedless gallant hurried his friends to the postern.

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"I am convinced," Mademoiselle said to the Abbé; "take me to my carriage."

All the way to the Tuileries she fought her battle, pride conquering at last. Charles presented himself only a trifle less jauntily than usual that evening.

"We missed our appointment by some strange fatality this afternoon," he said, with easy confidence. "I am devoured with anxiety to know the result of your interview with your father. Must my hopes be long deferred?"

"Only until midnight," Mademoiselle replied coldly.

Charles started. He thought that she had decided upon a secret marriage, and, with all his effrontery, could not feign a lover's enthusiasm.

Mademoiselle saw him blench, and smiled. Whatever he might have guessed, she was glad that she had never confessed how intensely she loved him. He would think her heartless; she had not humiliated herself, and she gathered self-possession.

"You remember when you went to England at my urging that I promised you that when you returned you should be satisfied with my answer?"

"Yes. Is it possible?"

She waved him back in her grandest manner. "Perfectly. My father has convinced me. You are free!"

He stood without a word, a sorry figure in his surprise; and she laughed with a brave pretence of merriment.

"Do you not understand? Hasten! you have no time to lose. Go and escort the Cardinal's nieces to Brühl."

IV

"ONE CROWDED HOUR OF GLORIOUS LIFE"

MADemoisELLE had no time to brood over or to regret her decision, for public events now swept her into the vortex of the Fronde. Anne of Austria's answer to the letter which the girl in her yielding mood had written was a factor in nerving her to action.

The Queen wrote her niece that she was delighted to know that she had relinquished her absurd childish fancy of one day wedding her little cousin Louis, and she promised Mademoiselle that she would use her influence with the King and with the Cardinal to bring about her marriage with the King of England. At the same time she could not

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resist the temptation to humiliate the proud girl, whose neglect she had lately keenly felt, by assuring her that there had never been any obstacle other than Charles's strange indifference, for the Cardinal had refused his proposal for the hand of Mademoiselle de Mancini, as he had other designs for his niece.

Mademoiselle understood now that the Cardinal had planned for this all along. Charles was only a lure to draw her from her old ambition, and her father had told her the truth. This conviction extinguished any lingering regret which she might have felt for her impetuous action. Louise de Bourbon-Montpensier could not accept a husband carelessly tossed aside by a Mancini. The Cardinal's "other designs" for Hortense had not developed, but for another niece the intimacy so long fostered with the boy-king made them seem to her perfectly clear, and Mademoiselle was changed from a confiding, credulous girl to a vindictive woman.

She was eager now to carry out the plans of the leaders of the Fronde,—above all to prevent the return of Mazarin. She no longer possessed any other thought or aim. "They shall all go down on their knees to me," she

told herself passionately, "and beg me to marry the King of France."

Only Charles's devoted mother, mystified and heartbroken, wept over the failure of her hopes; but no one marked her grief, for Henrietta Maria's gentle eyes were used to tears.

The Prince of Condé, in spite of his youth, was by all odds the most able and forceful man in the coalition of the Fronde, as well as the most picturesque personality of the time. His profile, with the aquiline nose and keen eye, suggests the hawk; his *verve*, his brilliant audacity, his cheerful insolence, and his tireless activity made him seem a scintillating, unquenchable flame rather than a human being; and Mademoiselle for the first time met a man whose leadership she was willing to follow.

Condé had been chosen General-in-Chief, and before leaving Paris to secure troops in Spain he swore to Mademoiselle that he would never lay down his sword until her marriage with the King was solemnly agreed upon.

Scarcely had Condé gone to the south of France before Mazarin, who had been collecting German mercenaries joined the Court at Blois, and sent an officer to Orléans to demand



TURENNE.

From steel engravings in the Musée de Chalcographie of the Louvre.



LE GRAND CONDÉ

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the surrender of the city, which, as the appanage of Gaston, had closed its gates to the King. In this predicament the city called upon its prince for direction; but the Duke of Orléans even now could not prevail upon himself to take an open stand. As usual in supreme crises, he took to his bed, evading responsibility by feigning illness.

Mademoiselle flew to the Luxembourg and rated her father in most unfilial terms; he had promised Condé to carry on hostilities in his absence. It was cowardly not to go to the succour of his own city.

"Go yourself, if you like," Gaston replied, stung to exasperation; and his daughter took him at his word. She would conquer her crown by force and show Mazarin, Charles Stuart, and all the world that she could play the part of a general in her own war.

The next morning she set out at the head of the troops, wearing the half-military costume in which she appears in her statue in the garden of the Luxembourg—a grey cloth riding suit ornamented with gold lace, and a felt hat with sweeping plumes shading her blond hair.

Paris followed her to the walls, wild with indignation that Mazarin had led foreign

mercenaries into the country to fight them, not caring that Condé was doing the same thing. The Parliament voted the confiscation and sale of Mazarin's magnificent library, the most important collection of books then existing. It was in vain that the librarian, who had selected it in all the principal cities of Europe, protested that Mazarin intended to leave it to the public. It was hastily sold at auction. Louis sent Fouquet with unlimited power to bid it in; but the Parliament, comprehending that in this way it would be returned to Mazarin, ordered its complete dispersion, by selling it in small lots. The librarian was so affected that he died of a broken heart. The sale of the paintings was to have followed, but events marched too rapidly, and they were saved.

On Mademoiselle's arrival before the city of Orléans, the officials, rendered cautious by the proximity of Mazarin's army, refused to admit her soldiers, or even to open the gates for her own entrance; but the bargemen on the Loire battered open a water-gate, and passed her triumphantly over the boats and into the town.

The citizens, who had watched her from the walls, applauded this plucky action, and car-

ried her upon a chair to the Hôtel de Ville, shouting "Down with Mazarin!"

Here the councillors, frightened by the popular demonstration quite as much as convinced by the eloquence with which she expounded the principles of the Fronde, agreed "to admit her troops, to rescue the King from the tyranny of the foreigner, and to resist his army *for his own good*."

For a month she queened it in Orléans, receiving the reports of the dukes and old army officers, planning the campaign and reviewing the army. Letters of congratulation poured in. Her intrepidity captivated the impressionable French fancy. Her father wrote her: "My daughter, you have saved Orléans and assured us Paris. Every one says that the exploit was worthy of the granddaughter of the great Henri."

Condé said, "No one but you could have done it."

When she returned to Paris, she was met by throngs wild with enthusiasm, who hailed her the second "Maid of Orléans" and deliverer of her country.

But the royal army was led by Turenne, a general greater than Mademoiselle, greater even than Condé, though not as yet so

recognised. The Prince de Condé had routed the King's defenders at Bléneau. It was his aim to secure the person of Louis, who was with his mother at the neighbouring château of Gien. Turenne not only prevented this design by holding the bridge over the Loire, but forced Condé to fall back and retreat to Paris. Turenne pursued him to the Porte Saint Antoine, and the fickle Parliament, who would have welcomed Condé had he come as a conqueror, realising now that the tide of battle had turned, refused to open the gate.

Turenne had Condé at a disadvantage, his troops — almost in disorder — penned in by the city wall, and he attacked his pursuers promptly, stimulated by the knowledge that he was fighting under the eyes of the King and Mazarin, who had followed him, and were watching the engagement from the heights of Charonne.

The Frondeurs fought with desperation. Turenne himself said afterward: "I did not see one Prince of Condé, but a dozen. He was everywhere at the same moment. Covered with blood and sweat, he would tear off his cuirass and wallow in the wet grass like a horse, then seize a standard and be seen fighting in the front rank."

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Mademoiselle had been wakened at two o'clock in the morning by the sound of trumpets, drums, and marching. At six a messenger came to her with a letter from Condé, imploring her aid. He had already sent a despatch to her father, who had sent word that he was very ill.

Mademoiselle rushed to the Luxembourg, and cried out with joy on meeting her father descending the staircase. "You are going to reinforce Condé, sick though you are!"

He assured her calmly that such a thing was furthest from his intentions. "I am indisposed," he insisted; "not ill enough to keep my bed, but too indisposed to go out."

Mademoiselle treated him to one of her terrible outpourings of scorn, for his baseness and cowardice, and again he gave her permission to act for him. She ordered his troops to follow her to the Hôtel de Ville, which was surrounded by a rabble; calling upon the council to open the gate, she flew up the staircase and, confronting de l'Hôpital (the Governor of Paris), declared that unless she was allowed to reinforce Condé she would incite the populace to burn the Hôtel de Ville.

It was no idle threat, for later they burned it without her urging when they learned that

the Parliament was treating with Mazarin. The Council of Paris, carried away by her eloquence, gave her *carte blanche*, and Condé was saved. The gate was opened, the city guard and the Duke of Orléans's regiment made a sortie, and the wounded were brought in.

Mademoiselle met the sorrowful procession. Many a gay young noble with whom she had danced, ghastly now with horrible wounds, carried on ladders or sustained by friends, stumbled along blinded with blood, to fall dying in the street. This was no playing at war as at Orléans, but the grim reality; and yet her heart did not fail her. "Take them into the Tuileries and bid my people provide for them. I will be with you in a moment," she cried, as she dashed away to the citadel of the Bastille, from whose ramparts she could see the entire field of battle.

Condé, encouraged by his reinforcement, had charged on one side, while on the other Turenne was manœuvring to get between him and the gate. Mademoiselle instantly ordered the gunners to cannonade the royal troops, and even Turenne was obliged to retreat before that volley. Mazarin, when he heard of her action, said, significantly, that

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when Mademoiselle trained the guns of the Bastille on the King's troops she killed her husband. Condé believed himself triumphant. He hurried directly from the field of battle to thank her; he was grimed with dirt, his cuirass full of dents and splashed with blood, though he himself was unwounded, but to Mademoiselle he seemed a demigod. Condé, too, was dangerously moved by her magnificent action. To love her was madness, for he was already married; but who with a man's heart could have resisted the dramatic situation? and it was well for Mademoiselle that her sense of honour was high, and her heart too recently wounded to be touched with more than admiration and such a friendship as one comrade might feel for another.

For a few months the Frondeurs held Paris, and the Prince and Mademoiselle *fêted* each other publicly. Condé's staff officers drank her health on one knee to the saluting of cannon. She reviewed his army outside the walls, and, carried away by her enthusiasm, called upon them to follow her and charge the royal outposts; but Condé caught the bridle of her horse and led her back to the city. The day ended with a banquet at the Tuileries.

The Prince, usually negligent, was in a brilliant uniform,—gold, silver, and black embroidery on grey, with a scarf of blue.

It was the last mirage of the Fronde. A few days later Condé came to Mademoiselle in despair. The Parliament, had written to Mazarin disclaiming the action at the Porte Saint Antoine, and begging the King to enter his repentant city. The Prince de Condé had come to ask her to fly with him to the Spanish Netherlands. "You are in danger here. Mazarin will never forgive you. You have saved my life,—will you not allow me to save yours? There is not a man in my army but would go to his death gladly for your sake."

She recalled him to his senses. "Do you not see, my friend, how impossible it is for us to flee together?"

At last he submitted, believing that he left her safe in her father's care. His men were not as devoted as he had fancied. They were deserting by platoons, and with his Spanish contingent he escaped to exile, feeling in the bitterness of his soul that all was lost—even honour.

But Mademoiselle could not believe that the end had come, until a royal courier ar-

rived, informing her that it was the King's desire that she should immediately vacate her apartment at the Tuileries, as he would have need of it when he entered the city.

Thus ignominiously turned out of doors, she sought refuge with her father, but the cowardly Duke of Orléans was hastily preparing to leave for Blois. He refused to take her with him or to give her the use of the Luxembourg, reproaching her for her desire to play the heroine, which had been the cause of all his misfortunes.

"If you will not allow me to remain in your home, I will establish myself at the Hôtel de Condé," said the desperate girl; "it is unoccupied, and if my cousin were in Paris he would not refuse me shelter."

"I forbid you to place yourself in so equivocal a position," was her father's reply.

"Then where do you wish me to go, sir?"

For answer he spread his hands and turned his back upon her.

She left him without a word, and as she realised her defenceless position, all her courage, born of love of applause, deserted her. She was no longer an Amazon, but a frightened, helpless girl. The streets were filled with her friends fleeing from Paris. On her

return to her apartment, she found twenty anonymous letters, telling her that her arrest had been determined upon. Wild with despair, her paternal heritage of panic overcame her, and she gave orders to her household to prepare for flight. Whither, she had no idea; but anywhere beyond the reach of that terrible Cardinal!

Prefontaine, her faithful steward, counselled coolness; but she was insane with fear, and he could do nothing with her. "Go, go!" she cried; "have two of my carriages outside the gate as soon as it is dark, and my guards ready. Madame Fiesque will remain here to pack and will follow. I will take you and Madame de Frontenac in the first carriage, my most indispensable servants in the other."

"But where are we going?" Prefontaine repeated for the twentieth time.

"To my mother's house," replied a calm voice at her side. It was her father's chaplain, the Abbé Rancé, who had interfered once before at a crisis in her life.

"My father has sent you to protect me!" she cried; "then I am not utterly abandoned."

"You are not forsaken," he replied evasively. "My mother will be delighted to receive you in her château, until you can decide

on your future movements. You are quite right to leave Paris, but there is no immediate danger."

He escorted her to Madame Le Bouthillier's country house, not far from Paris; and here Mademoiselle and her train were kept in hiding for several days, while the Abbé came and went, learning that Mazarin was indeed greatly incensed against her and resolved upon forcing her to enter a convent. He had imagined that she would immediately take refuge in her château of Eu, and his agents had that château and the routes in its direction well watched.

This information was not reassuring; a convent was only another name for a prison, and Mademoiselle's terror grew. The Abbé's cloth was for him a certain protection. He had remained openly in Paris instead of fleeing with his patron. Mazarin thought him too insignificant to pursue, and he continued to act as the secret letter-carrier for the leaders of the Fronde. On the very day that the Abbé reported what he had learned of Mazarin's designs with relation to Mademoiselle, he brought with him a messenger, Sebastien de Vauban, who was at that time still devoted to the Prince de Condé, and had been sent by him

with a letter for Mademoiselle. The Prince had obtained permission of Count Fuendalsagna, the representative of the King of Spain, for Mademoiselle to establish herself in the Netherlands, and he wrote her,—

“I am wild with anxiety for your safety, I offer you my army and my all. I am absolutely yours.

“LOUIS DE BOURBON.”

Still Mademoiselle resisted. “It is surely best for me not to give a pretext for confiscating my estates by exiling myself,” she said.

“The Prince de Condé feared this might be your decision,” said the messenger; “and, in case you could not be persuaded to leave France, gave me permission to suggest another alternative,—a fortified château which we have both recently examined, and know to be in a state to resist a siege.”

“Not the Prince’s château of Chantilly? That were equally impossible!”

“No, Mademoiselle. It is your own *château fort* of Saint Fargeau, on the edge of Burgundy. Were you never there?”

“Never; though I believe I was not far from it when I was at Orléans. I always supposed it to be a ruin. How does it happen that you know it?”

"I am a Burgundian, Mademoiselle, from the Morvan, that wild mountain region more savage than Switzerland, and less known to Parisians. It bristles with old feudal castles, and all within tramping radius of my home. I have explored and studied,—for the science of fortification is with me a passion,—and I know of no castle in the east of France, not even Chastellux, that is so strong as Saint Fargeau. Twenty men could hold it against an army."

"Who are you," asked Mademoiselle, "that you speak with so much authority, and that the Prince de Condé should send you to advise me?"

"Only a young engineer, my lady; but the Prince deigned to act upon my advice at the battle of Bléneau; and it was before that encounter that I took him to Saint Fargeau and showed him what an impregnable fortress was at hand to which we could retreat in case of defeat. If Mademoiselle will hasten to take refuge there, trust me, Mazarin will let her well alone."

"Your advice strikes me as good," said Mademoiselle. "Come with me to Saint Fargeau and teach us how to take advantage of its strength."

Madame Le Bouthillier did her best to help her guest upon her journey. All night long her ovens glowed, baking loaves of bread and roasting pigeons. All night her dairy maids packed butter and cheese in hampers, and the cellarer stowed the best wines in the travelling carriages. Before daybreak Mademoiselle's *cortège* was on the road; and the Abbé had returned to Paris to notify Madame Fiesque in what direction to send Mademoiselle's luggage vans. Some one followed far enough to guess their destination, and reported to Mazarin; for a messenger from the King waited upon Mademoiselle at the same time that the little procession filed over the drawbridge and halted in the court of the dismantled and desolate old castle. His Majesty informed his cousin that he was glad to know that she had chosen Saint Fargeau as her future residence. *So long as she remained there* she might count upon his protection.

The letter was in one sense reassuring; there would be no siege, no *lettre de cachet* to send her to the Bastile or to a convent. She was equally harmless in this voluntary prison, and the "protection" accorded was her sentence of banishment from the Court.

V

AT SAINT FARGEAU

It was early in November, 1652, when Mademoiselle entered the grass-grown court of the ancient fortress,—a weary, but no longer a terror-stricken, fugitive; for her heart had leapt at the first distant view of the giant towers silhouetted against the morning sky.

It was an impregnable stronghold still; no battering-ram had ever made a breach in its cyclopean walls, for in all the troublous past it had never been taken by assault. Here, at least, she would be safe.

She ran over it with the young engineer, appreciating with delight all his explanations of the ancient modes of defence. Here were the mangonels ready to be set up, but it would be well to replace them with mortars. There were the sally-port and the subterranean passage, through which the garrison could escape in case of siege. This was the great donjon-keep, the citadel within the citadel,—which could be held after the enemy had possession of the rest of the castle; even gunpowder could not shake its massive walls. There were the prisons and the *oubliettes*, but Mademoiselle would surely have no use for

them, and it were well to use them for granaries or wine vaults. The young man called her attention to the great amount of room in the long wings,—space here for all the inhabitants of the little hamlet at the castle's foot, and room in the "bailey" for all their animals.

"You would let them all come in, Mademoiselle, in case of siege?" he pleaded. "You would never have the heart to turn out the 'useless mouths' or leave to the revenge of the Cardinal serfs whose only crime was that they had given you welcome?"

Mademoiselle promised him grandly that they should all be admitted.

"That is my dream," he said; "to make the castle so great that it shall embrace the town; and the fortifications of every frontier city so strong and so ample that in case of war no Frenchman in all the country round, however poor, need be left out, defenceless, to the invader."

"It is a noble dream," said Mademoiselle. "Stay with me and be my general, at least until all my little garrison are well drilled and equipped."

"As long as you are in need or danger, were my Prince's orders," Vauban replied. And

then the royal herald had arrived, and Mademoiselle knew that there would be no fighting, and she had no longer any excuse to keep the engineer from Condé. When he went she gave him a letter for his master, assuring the Prince of her gratitude for his solicitude, which was fully reciprocated. She would not acknowledge now that they had failed.

"You will make the Cardinal fear you yet," she wrote. "I hope great things from you. As for me, I never was happier in my life. At last I am independent, queen over my little kingdom; and I shall gather my Court about me and reign without a rival. I regret nothing."

Then, woman-like, she added the postscript, for which she had written the letter:

"You may tell this to my cousin, Charles Stuart, should you meet him in your journeying."

In her heart she knew that she had miserably failed,—that her dream of glory was gone forever; and the bitterest drop in her cup—the one insupportable thought—was that Charles would know of her humiliation. "He will not know of it from Condé," she comforted herself. "He at least will tell him

that I acted nobly,—that I was worthy of the purple if I did not gain it.”

It was not in her nature to brood disheartened; she went to work at once to make her vaunt true, and to turn the huge empty caravansary into a palace. She saw room in the straggling barracks for a great retinue, and in that first rapid survey assigned lodging to each person in her household.

The Countess of Fiesque, whose surveillance she detested, should be installed as far as possible from her own apartment; but Madame de Frontenac might have a bed in her own chamber. The six violinists, who were soldiers as well, should be the guard of the barbican. Dr. Guilloire's laboratory must be next to the kitchen, so that he could use its fires for making his decoctions, and must open into the garden, where he could grow simples besides the pot herbs. The great donjon-keep, or *tour de trésor*, was full of manuscripts. Segrais, the poet, who was her secretary, should be established here, and read them for her,—perhaps he might discover something interesting, as, indeed, he did, and others as well.

She planned improvements,—new chimneys and fireplaces for the great fires which

would be needed to keep them all comfortable in the coming winter; alcoves, to give more shelter for the beds; doors to be opened directly from one great hall into another, instead of descending the tortuous staircases to the court and mounting again, as was the fashion in all feudal châteaux; broader windows; and presently there should be a new and grander *logis* in the court. Her people stared at her in amazement. Mademoiselle had been actually weeping with weariness and fright, but from the moment that the portcullis fell behind her and she felt herself "the châtelaine," she was gayer than they had ever seen her. The thoughtful Prefontaine reminded her on her arrival that there was but one bed in the entire building, and that there was no telling when her sumpter-mules might arrive. He must leave her to seek temporary furnishing. "No matter," Mademoiselle called after him; "if it cannot be found, order the peasants to bring straw. We will camp upon it *à la guerre comme à la guerre*."

Her suite expected her high spirits to give way presently, but her new toy amused her through eight years.

Having ascertained that her estates were not to be confiscated, she called upon her

father to render an account for his management of her finances. Greatly disgusted, he wrote her:

“You know too much already about your own affairs. It is not a woman’s province to concern herself with them. Persons of your quality should amuse themselves and never talk of business. If you had ever done me the honour to ask about your fortune, I would have changed the conversation.”

Mademoiselle did not allow her father to change the subject, and, much to his disgust, the courts took his daughter’s view of the necessity of the Duke’s rendering to Mademoiselle a strict account of his management during her minority of the estate left her by her mother.

Gaston could have forgiven her high-handed behaviour in every other particular, but to be forced through a lawsuit to make good his *borrowing* was conduct most unfilial. Finding, after the settlement of her affairs, that she could afford to amuse herself with building, she sent for the most popular architect of the time—Le Vau (who was soon to add to his reputation by building Fouquet’s great château), and employed him until 1657 in her extensive alterations and additions.

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Thus the palatial façade of the interior court of Saint Fargeau came into existence. The great baronial hall of justice was remodelled into a little theatre, and the troupe of comedians of Lyons was sent for from time to time to act plays for her amusement and that of her guests.

Stables and kennels were built for horses and a pack of hounds, for which she sent to England. The forest was full of game—deer, boars, and even wolves, and she hunted three times a week, using the dogs which Charles liked best; perhaps with some vague notion that some day he might visit Saint Fargeau and inspect her kennels.

Through the thick forest she had cut long *allées*, radiating *en étoile* from one central spot; she cleared a great court of underbrush for the game of *maille*, for she was as expert in that athletic sport as any man, and she laid out terraces with flights of steps leading to a boat-house and landing.

In the long, new gallery she hung her paintings, and set a billiard-table for amusement on rainy days. Another occupation of interest unexpectedly developed. Her secretary, Segrais, burrowing in her MSS., traced the history of the château of Saint Fargeau.

It was pleasant in the long winter evenings, as she sat in front of the blazing logs, to listen to the poet's treasure-trove of legend and tradition, gleaned from musty deeds, records of lawsuits, and chronicles of monks.

These researches so whetted her curiosity to know more of her genealogy that she sent to Paris for the most expert herald-at-arms of the day—the Sire de Hozier, who decorated a long gallery with the different coats-of-arms of her ancestors, and explained how the quarterings allied her to many royal houses, all the time ministering to her pride by assuring her that the house of Bourbon was incontestably the greatest in all the world. This partly consoled her for her disappointment in not becoming Queen of France, for she reflected that she could have gained no additional distinction as the wife of Louis XIV., since she was already a Bourbon and of the same regal lineage.

After this, Mademoiselle returned with increased pleasure to the contemplation of the portraits in her ancestral picture-gallery,¹

¹ "I already possessed," she tells us in her characteristic way, "portraits of the King, my grandpapa [Henri IV.] and the Queen my grandmamma [Marie de Médicis]; my uncle and aunt the King and Queen of Spain [Philip IV. and Elizabeth of France]; my uncle and aunt the late King and

which included many kings and queens, princes and high dignitaries of France, England, and Spain. She sent to her château of Eu for the portraits of the Guises, and she filled all gaps in her collection of living relatives by ordering their portraits painted by the most skilful living artists. She already had fine portraits of her two royal cousins, Charles and Louis; and in her journal she would have us believe that she looked at their faces without a flicker of the eyelid or flutter of heart.

Le Vau had effected a wonderful transformation. Instead of ruinous barracks, Mademoiselle had now magnificent apartments—antechambers, reception-rooms, salons, state bedrooms (*chambres de parade*), a boudoir wainscoted in mirrors, besides the galleries already mentioned and many others. The expenditure for all this building was two hundred thousand livres, and the furnishing and decoration amounted to much more. She had now arrived at a period when she could Queen of England [Charles I. and Henrietta Maria]; my cousins, the King of England [Charles II.], the Duke of York [afterwards James II.], and the Prince and Princess of Orange; my uncle and aunt the late King and Queen Regent of France [Louis XIII. and Anne of Austria]; my royal cousin the King of France [Louis XIV.]; my father and mother, their royal highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Orléans," etc.

entertain, and she recounts that, often living for months in a *grenier*, her new château seemed to her an enchanted palace. She at once ordered handsome furniture, and showered her friends (Madame de Sévigné and the Marquis de Monglat among others) with invitations to visit her. She received many compliments, being assured by persons of taste that the house was magnificent and worthy of her; and she adds, with less than her usual arrogance, "I only made over an old house which had, however, something grand about it."

So the years passed, and Mademoiselle would not acknowledge that she was lonely or homesick for Court or city.

It was possibly at this time that she wrote Madame de Motteville that she thought of establishing a colony of persons of both sexes weary of Court life,—devoted to reading, music, gardening, and the pleasures of country life. This colony should be governed by the most scrupulous virtue and courtesy; but there should be no gallantry, no love, and, above all, no marriage.

Madame de Motteville replied:

"You are right to encourage the pleasures of refined conversation and to banish gallantry; but I

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greatly fear, my Princess, that your sage and necessary laws would be badly obeyed, and that you would find yourself obliged to permit that common error which ancient custom has rendered legitimate, and which is called marriage."

It was but the superb effort of an unconquered will to deceive the world, for Mademoiselle's pride was pitted against an irrepressible craving for love, which was to break all bonds and reveal her as one of the most passionate, instead of the coldest, of women. Learning of Charles's financial straits—that he was living, like his exiled cavaliers, in German garrets, too poor to maintain a respectable establishment, she sent him, through his mother, an offer of aid, which he was too proud to accept.

She still attempted to fill her mind with constant occupation. Her companion, Madame de Frontenac (whose husband was to carve for himself a career as the greatest of the early Governors of Canada), was something of a *bas-bleu*, and they had both attended the literary gatherings at the Hôtel de Rambouillet. Although Mademoiselle affected to ridicule the pretensions of the *précieuses*, she imitated them in secret. Madame de Frontenac amused herself by writing a *Journey to the Moon*, anticipating Jules Verne by

more than two centuries; and Mademoiselle pursued the same vein in a romance entitled *The Invisible Island*.

She had begun, too, her more serious work,—her interminable memoirs, which her secretary, Segrain, was editing for her; when, suddenly, into this tranquil and outwardly happy life there was projected—for Mademoiselle—an intense shock, for her little Court a nine-days' wonder and mystery.

The shock came in a personal letter from Louis XIV., announcing his approaching marriage with Maria Theresa, daughter of Philip IV. of Spain. The French victories in the Netherlands had been followed by secret negotiations, which would presently be confirmed by public treaty between the two crowns. He wished to be the first to inform his cousin of the happy event pending and to beg her to attend his marriage, to give up her self-imposed (?) exile, and return to Court. He added that her own happiness was a matter very dear to his heart, and that, as peace was now happily concluded, he would occupy himself in arranging for her an alliance as acceptable to her inclinations as suitable to her rank.

Mademoiselle's heart leapt and then stood

still. No, it was too late; all that was over and dead. Charles did not love her. In all these years he had never rebelled against her hasty dismissal, never striven to revoke her decision.

And then her secretary handed her another letter. It was from Charles himself. Banished from French soil since the treaty with Cromwell, he had entered France in disguise and was now in hiding at the neighbouring town of Auxerre. He craved her hospitality for one night in strictest secrecy, and begged her, for the sake of old memories and any lingering cousinly affection, to give him the interview for which he had risked his life. With the sudden comprehension that Charles's silence might, like her own, have been born of wounded pride, and that the mists of misunderstanding were now to be cleared away, the great hall careened like a galley with a broken helm, and the frightened Segrais shouted to Madame de Frontenac that Mademoiselle had fainted.

With this clue the mystery of the chamber of archives in the old *tour de trésor* is at last solved; but the secretary and Madame de Frontenac alone enjoyed Mademoiselle's confidence, and her little Court, like the great

world, was filled with sharp eyes and tongues. So Segrais was sent in Mademoiselle's carriage on some pretended errand to Auxerre, returning with Charles after the occupants of the château were asleep. Not quite all, for Mademoiselle, consumed in turn by hope and fear, and in both moods by intolerable impatience, had waited in the prison-like room, wainscoted by precious manuscripts, for whose deciphering the window had been broadened and for whose safe-guard it had been barred. Segrais had frightened the pigeons from the neighbouring room, had cleaned and fitted it as a bedchamber, and Mademoiselle had herself lighted the fire upon the hearth of the chamber of archives, which was to serve Charles as a living-room while guest at Saint Fargeau.

She had done much more, for, with the help only of Madame de Frontenac, and under cover of night, she had transferred hither many luxuries, and the little room had all the appointments of a king's cabinet. Tapestry curtained the doors, a comfortable arm-chair was rolled before the fire, supper awaited his arrival, and the service on the buffet, on which Segrais would set forth his meals, was of solid gold. She had remembered his fa-

avourite books and music, and had hung his mother's portrait above his bed.

Dear Aunt Henrietta, how the smiles would have chased away that pitiful expression about the pathetic mouth, if she could have known that at last—at last—the dearest wish of her heart was to be fulfilled! It was more for her aunt's sake than for that of the man she deemed her lover that Mademoiselle laid a rose upon the lower edge of the picture frame.

Lest her cousin might be lonely, she had brought her pet spaniel,—a silky-eared King Charles, the exact counterpart of "little Flo,"—his playmate as a child, which Vandyck painted. His favourite wine, a decanter of Malmsey, was on the stand, with pipes and tobacco. How fortunate it was that she happened to have them! she said to Madame de Frontenac, never acknowledging, even to herself, that she had kept them for just this exigency. She did not know herself in her excitement, her eagerness, and happiness. How she had hated Charles for his fickleness! and now she loved him for it. He had forgotten that little episode of the Cardinal's niece and had come back to her. How easy it was to forgive! Please God she would keep

him now, so that he would never wander again. If he was homeless, he should be so no longer; hunted, she would hide him,—defend him so that no prying eyes should find, or power on earth snatch him from her. She knew now what Saint Fargeau had lacked—only love; and, having that, she was content to bide in her enchanted castle forever.

How her heart beat as she heard her carriage-wheels, and her companion ran down the spiral staircase to let the travellers in! She was trembling so violently when she heard his step upon the stair, that she was obliged to sink into the great chair, closing her eyes to hide the happy tears.

Seeing her thus motionless, Charles thought her asleep, and placed his fingers over her eyes with a playful "Guess who!"

"Thank God, 't is you, Charles—the same light-hearted boy"; and the prodigal, seeing more of kindness in her welcome than he had anticipated, gave her right cousinly greeting; then, catching sight of the venison pasty, he fell upon it with a traveller's appetite, while her eyes devoured him as hungrily.

Segraï came and went, serving deftly; and Madame de Frontenac waited, yawning, below, while they talked together until dawn.

"Tell me everything," Mademoiselle had said; "all that has happened in these years,—why you have come to me now, and why you never came before."

"How could I come, even had I been free to return to France, when you gave me so stern a *congé* at our parting? Nay, take no blame to yourself—it was deserved, and for my good. Everything that you have ever done for me, my cousin, has profited me, though it has sometimes been bitter physic in the taking. You made a man of me when you waked the Stuart courage in the breast of an indolent good-for-nothing, and set him to fighting his own battles, for very shame at playing a less manly part than your own. Your fine scorn lashed me for duplicity in love, and forced me to look into my own heart and make an honest decision."

Mademoiselle lifted her hand, but he gave her no opportunity to speak.

"You were right to refuse me, miserable hypocrite that I was! You deserve the entire heart of the best man living, and you have it. God! how Condé loves you! He worships the ground you tread upon."

"How can you speak to me of him?" she cried. "Such love is dishonour."

"It is not, sweet cousin. He knows that he can hope for nothing, can offer you nothing, —that he must not even see you while his wife lives. Such love as that is not dishonour. But they say that she is dying. Curse her, she ought to die! Such a woman has no business to live."

"Charles," said Mademoiselle, sharply, "did you come to talk to me about the Prince of Condé?"

"Yes; that is precisely why I came. He will do anything and everything you wish. Matters have changed in England. The people are tired of Noll's Roundheads, and are ready to rise. Condé is in Spain, eating his heart out. I want him to head my army and to go with me to England. One word from you and he will do it, and will lead the Spanish soldiers of fortune with him."

"Poor Condé has no influence in Spain. Mazarin has King Philip under his thumb. Perhaps you do not know, but Louis will marry the Infanta, and for her dowry she brings the very territory which has been in dispute. I know that the Cardinal is to meet Don Luis de Haro on the Island of Pheasants, on the boundary line between the two countries. I shall surprise them both, for I intend

to be present at their conference and to secure the alliance of both France and Spain."

"How dare you, when you know that the Cardinal is pledged to the English Parliament?"

"I have proof that will satisfy him that my success is now certain even without his assistance, and that I merely offer him the honour of appearing to turn the scales by declaring in my favour. Oh, trust Mazarin for being the champion of the winning side! Besides, I have a card to play which I think will give me the game. I shall give him the power of naming the future Queen of England."

"This is too much!" Mademoiselle cried, rising suddenly. "You are as incorrigibly heartless as ever. Do you suppose that any woman would allow herself to be sold for a crown?"

"I think a few might; and the woman whom I wish to make Queen of England I love with all my heart, and have loved for years. She knows it, and I believe that she loves me enough to be my wife even if I fail."

Mademoiselle resumed her seat and shaded her face from the glare of the fire. Charles was sitting on the rug at her feet and did not notice that she was profoundly moved. She

let her hand fall upon his head and stroked his long hair silently. She had suffered so much, had waited so long, that now that blessedness had come to her, a great awe sent her soul to its knees. Doubtless Charles also felt the restraining influence of this incredible felicity, for, although his sincerity was apparent, it was accompanied by no caress.

They were both silent for a moment under the stress of emotion, and then Charles kissed her hand and sprang lightly to his feet, taking his stand behind her chair.

"You give me no encouragement," he said. "You probably think me too romantic and impulsive. Let us look at the matter from a more practical standpoint. Do you not think that Cardinal Mazarin might consider me worthy of his diplomacy if I succeed?"

"I know that he is interested in you now," she replied; "but you are reckless to attempt to ride the entire length of France before your banishment has been rescinded. You will never reach the Pyrenees. You will be recognised and imprisoned by some over-zealous official. What a wild, daring fellow you are!"

"It is love makes me daring, sweet cousin. Wild I am, too,—wild to see my sweetheart.

It has been so long,—so long; but we found means to write each other such letters! Stay, you shall read hers and judge for yourself if she loves me; and mine were not greatly behind in eloquence. But the Cardinal found us out at last, and has shut Hortense up with her sister Marie in a convent at Saint Jean d'Angely, not far from La Rochelle, and quite on the way to the frontier. Love will give me wings so far, and then it is only a little way to Spain. When the Cardinal knows that I wish to make his niece my queen, he surely will not refuse me."

He had been so intensely interested in his own recital that he had not noticed Mademoiselle's silence; but when he at length took breath and looked at her he was startled.

"How tired you look! What a brute I am! I have kept you up all night."

"Yes, it is morning, now," said Segrais, who entered after a discreet tap. "Mademoiselle must come away, and your Majesty must sleep, too."

"Segrais is right," Mademoiselle acknowledged. "Sleep well, Cousin Charles."

"Not by the court, but this way," Segrais continued, as they left the chamber, leading his mistress up the spiral staircase into the

long attic which lay directly under the many-raftered roof. "Your people would see you if you crossed the open courtyard. For your life, do not touch those ropes!" for Mademoiselle was groping blindly by the wall.

"Why not?" she asked, dully, not caring for his answer.

"Did you not see them in the room below at the head of the bed? They hold the trap-door on which it stands, and beneath them is only a deep shaft to the oubliette, which has no opening but a sluice-gate to the moat. That is the sort of hospitality the castle afforded certain of its guests in the old days, Mademoiselle,—a hospitality that was so pressing that they never cared to leave."

"Are you sure the ropes are strong,—that the rats have not gnawed them?"

"They are strong, Mademoiselle, for I replaced the old by new ones; but do not hold the candle so close,—they are only tow after all."

She let him lead her on to her own part of the château, descending a staircase in the wall which opened into her bedroom. But she could not sleep; she was fevered, half-crazed by the shock which she had suffered. "How much can a woman endure?" she

asked herself as she read the letters which Hortense had written her lover; and the passionate words told her that the child had become a woman, and that she loved Charles Stuart with all the intensity of her fierce Italian nature.

"You ask if I will be your wife," Hortense wrote, "even if you are never King. I answer that I have never loved a king, but only you, you. I answer you further, as I never thought to be your Queen neither do I ask to be your wife. Since that is impossible, it is enough for me to be your sweetheart."

As she read this, Mademoiselle crumpled the paper fiercely. "She loves him more than I," she said to herself, "for I could never be his save in honour." Then, as she read on, she realised that here was a noble nature about to sacrifice itself through a devotion of which she herself was not capable; and she told herself that no man—and Charles least of all—was worthy such devotion. She would mourn his death at first, but it might save her from her own undoing.

The devilish enginery in the old feudal tower fascinated Mademoiselle's imagination. A singe of the candle, a slash of a knife, and Charles would never more prove himself unfaithful. Such things were still done. Queen

Christina of Sweden, while visiting France, had caused her perfidious lover, Monaldeschi, to be stabbed to death openly at Fontainebleau. No one but Madame de Frontenac and Segrais knew of Charles's presence at Saint Fargeau: their silence could be secured. It was all so easy, and yet not easy. She longed for revenge, but not that way; and to escape the dangerous attraction in the attic of the château, she called her chief huntsman and a few minutes later was tearing through the woods, with dogs and beaters far behind her.

The fresh air cooled her brain, and showed her how clumsy and brutal was this old, barbaric kind of vengeance. They managed things with more refinement with their slow poisons in the time of the Valois, and the Bourbons surely should not return to mediæval methods! After all, it was quite unnecessary to do anything. She had only to turn Charles from her door and others would compass his death. A word of warning to the Cardinal, and his musketeers would be at Saint Jean d'Angely to receive him. She had turned her horse now and was riding calmly homeward, for her resolution was taken. In the courtyard she met the leader of her violins, and she bade him summon his orchestra

and later in the day play all her favourite music in the court near the Tour de Trésor. Then, mounting to her room, she slept as calmly as though her conscience were at rest.

She had not noticed the expression of curiosity on the face of her chief musician, or the interest with which he had been interrogating Segrais in regard to certain mysterious circumstances which had not escaped the keen eyes of the occupants of the castle. In the first place, the room which had been utilised as Charles's bedchamber had formerly been appropriated by pigeons, who flew in and out through an unglazed loophole. It was noticed by the servants that the loophole had been covered on the inside by a netting, and that the pigeons, which Segrais had driven from the tower, had established themselves in the lofts of the barns. There must be some reason for this migration, and when, the night before, a light was seen within the great window of the adjoining room, and the shadow of a man flitted across the panes, the peasants crossed themselves and said the tower was haunted.

The soldiers of Mademoiselle's guard were less superstitious, and, noting the apparition attentively, they interrogated Segrais. The

secretary assured them that the chamber was uninhabited, that no one could pass to it except through his rooms; but he would not allow the guard to investigate for themselves, and, being new at lying, the words came not over-glibly, and his demeanour betrayed the man with a secret. When told that the window had been watched and the mysterious shadow seen, Segrais declared that it must have been his own, as the manuscripts of the château were kept in that room and he frequently consulted them at night. But Segrais was assured that this explanation would not hold water, for the shadow was that of a younger and far more elegant gallant than himself, and, moreover, his own silhouette had been observed at the same time, bent over a book at his reading-desk below; and, most damaging testimony of all, Mademoiselle's silhouette had been recognised on the pane above. At that Segrais lost his temper and bade them ask Mademoiselle herself, if they could not believe the word of a gentleman.

No one had quite the effrontery to do this; but in the afternoon, when the orchestra at Mademoiselle's order were playing in the court all the gay dances which had been their accustomed repertoire in the old days at the

Tuileries, little Lulli, Mademoiselle's privileged page, was put forward to tell the story of the ghost in the Tour de Trésor.

Mademoiselle looked not a whit terrified, but she was evidently annoyed, when, as the band struck up a rollicking Jacobite tune, a handkerchief was seen to flutter from the barred window, the leader of the violins thrust his tongue into his cheek, and the faces of the other five were variously distorted.

Then Mademoiselle, with that adequacy for any emergency which never but once failed her, called the leader to her and announced that on the morrow she would set out for her estate of Chatellerault in Poitou, and that she would require as mounted guards only her six musicians.

It was notorious that the chief cause of Mademoiselle's litigation with her father was his yielding this estate to the heirs of Cardinal Richelieu upon conditions to which she had never agreed. Her wish to inspect the domain in controversy was therefore natural; and when Mademoiselle added, with perfect self-possession, that she would be accompanied in her coach by Madame de Frontenac, by her secretary, and by the Abbé Rancé, who was possessed of perfect knowledge concerning her

father's management of this estate, and (having come from Blois to assist her) was at present deep in consultation of the deeds in her chamber of archives, the leader of the violins hung his head in utter discomfiture. No one noticed the triumph in Mademoiselle's slant glance, and the gossiping musician was the butt of his comrades in the barracks, who believed their mistress's version of the case. What more likely? The Abbé had always been her devoted friend. He had an estate of his own in Touraine, near the château of Montbazou, and not so very far from Châtelleraud; he was well acquainted with all that country. Was there ever such an ass as their leader, to imagine a romance where none existed?

"If it is all so daylight clear," persisted the first violin sulkily, "why all this mystery about the Abbé's visit? Why did Segrais lie to me? Answer me that."

"Let Segrais answer, since he is here."

And Segrais (who had been further coached by Mademoiselle), explained that, as the Abbé Rancé was still in the employ of the Duke of Orléans, it was desirable that no rumour should find its way to his patron that he was playing into Mademoiselle's hands.

The leader of the violins might not have been reduced to such complete self-abasement could he have known that immediately after this lucid explanation, Segrais rode to the nearest town and procured a hat such as the Abbé Rancé usually wore, and a travelling cloak with a particularly high collar, and that Mademoiselle and Madame de Frontenac worked late into the night transforming a well-worn black velvet cavalier suit into a semblance of the Abbé's clerical elegance. The rakish, tarnished gold *gallons* were hastily ripped off, and some of Mademoiselle's choicest lace furnished the ruffles concerning which Rancé was known to be fastidious, while a silver cross, suspended from a violet ribbon, was substituted for the Order of the Garter.

Thus disguised, and conducted by Mademoiselle, Charles made the journey safely to Saint Jean d'Angely, wondering greatly at the silence and moodiness of his companion, but grateful to her for this unexpected assistance. He could not guess the passions contending for mastery in that intense soul; or that, rapidly as they journeyed, a swifter courier, sent on from Saint Fargeau, was leaving them far behind. as he carried a letter to

Cardinal Mazarin. As they approached their destination, Mademoiselle's suppressed excitement grew more intense; one would have said that she was expecting some event or person, but nothing happened until they presented themselves at the convent gate.

Here they were received as though anticipated, and ushered respectfully into a small reception-room. The Mother Superior was in waiting.

"His Eminence will see you at once," she said, as she lifted a *portière*.

"His Eminence!" Charles gasped; but he had no opportunity to retreat, for there was a flash of brilliant red in the sunny cloister, and Mazarin approached them, raising his hand in blessing.

"It was a peculiar letter you sent me, my daughter," he said to Mademoiselle, raising her graciously from her knees. "You accept his Majesty's kind invitation to return to Court 'on one condition.' One does not usually make conditions with one's sovereign in accepting favours; but the one you ask is not excessive and falls in line with the King's wishes. Let me re-read your words and see if I understand your meaning.

"You request your royal cousin to extend

his protection and friendship to King Charles II. of England, to the extent of countenancing him in his attempts to gain his crown, and as pledge and guaranty of such alliance to sanction his marriage with a French subject of your naming. This compact, as I have said, seems to me extraordinary in its tone, but not in its intent, and the King, at my advice, will accede to your request."

"Oh! your Eminence!" Mademoiselle exclaimed, genuflecting again to the floor and kissing the Cardinal's hand in her gratitude; while Charles, overjoyed, threw himself on his knees at her side.

The Cardinal smiled, but shook his finger in pretended displeasure. "Rise, sir, and lay aside the garb of the Church, which you have no right to wear."

"Why not, sir, when you don and become so well the uniform of a soldier?"

"Nay, no flatteries; but prepare to return with me to Spain, that I may forward your business so far as I can with Don Luis de Haro."

"May I not first, your Eminence, be permitted an interview with your niece?"

"With my niece! and to what purpose?" and the Cardinal's astonishment was sincere.

"Your Eminence has not asked me to name the wife of my choice, but surely you can have no doubt——"

The Cardinal raised his hand forbiddingly. "Mademoiselle will tell me whom she had in mind at her own convenience," he said sternly. "The King's grace to you comes through her, and, though I fear you are not worthy, your bride is to be of her choosing."

"Then," Mademoiselle replied, "I beg your Eminence to consent to the King of England's marriage with your niece Hortense."

"My nieces are not for kings," the Cardinal replied in confusion. "They are of no rank. What pretensions can Hortense have to such an honour?"

"They love each other," Mademoiselle replied. "I have it from Charles and from her letters. You will mar their lives, God knows how terribly, if you refuse. You cannot refuse, for you have given me your promise. Hortense is a queenly woman,—a crown cannot make her more so. There is not in all the world a more arrogant stickler for rank than I, and I shall be proud to welcome her as my cousin."

"A devil of a ride," Mademoiselle's chief huntsman had called her reckless dash through

the forest of Saint Fargeau on the morning when Charles's confession of his love for Hortense had shattered her dream of happiness. But the huntsman was wrong, for her good angel was at her side combating the attraction of the Satanic enginery of the *oubliette* and teaching her what revenge to take.

In this as in every act of her life Mademoiselle was acting a play with only herself as audience, but now, as always, though her heart was breaking, she would abate no jot of grandeur or of magnanimity. Her life should be no ignoble farce but a heroic drama of achievement and renunciation.

VI

THE LADIES OF THE FLYING HEART

No one need have envied the Cardinal at this juncture, for the great ambition of his life, laboured for by the most adroit and diplomatic scheming and long and bitter warfare, on the very eve of its realisation was in the direst jeopardy, and all through the wilfulness of his niece Marie.

While Mademoiselle and Charles and Hortense had been weaving their tangled web, another of greater importance to the French

nation had been forming under the Cardinal's very eyes.

Of all his beautiful wards, Marie had given her uncle the greatest perplexity, for, like her sister Hortense, her heart was possessed to flutter in a forbidden direction. But Hortense masked her self-will under apparent complacency, while Marie dared openly to defy her guardian.

In their different ways they set about the attainment of their objects, and countenanced and consoled one another in their revolt. They were very nearly of the same age, and as large families frequently break up into cliques, these two were more intimately associated than the others. They shared each other's occupations during the day, and whispered their secrets into each other's ears at night. They acted in turn as sentinels for stolen interviews, as carriers of clandestine letters; they clasped each other's hands in secret ecstasy or sobbed out their wretchedness in each other's arms. And yet, of all his nieces, the Cardinal had loved these two best; and it was only when their desires clashed with the great aim which he had set before him that he denied them anything. At this distance Mazarin's life rings true; its single object was

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the establishment of an absolute French monarchy, and he succeeded beyond the scope of his prevision. He taught his royal pupil to obey in order that he might learn to govern, and no young man ever had a more inflexible tutor.

In the intimacy of the intercourse which existed between the Palais Royal and Palais Cardinal, Louis and Marie de Mancini had learned to love each other. Is it possible that so evident a consequence escaped Mazarin's astute comprehension? It seems more likely that he had at first ambitious projects, which he sacrificed as time went on to what he deemed his duty.

It was while this crop of mischief was being sown that Prince Charles of England first came and went, exciting the precocious imagination of little Hortense. Then the troubles of the Fronde alternately separated and united the two pairs of lovers in a series of rapid adventures. The exiled maidens were joined by Charles at the château of Brühl. On their return to Paris they left him in exile but found Louis handsomer and more manly and more than ever in love with Marie.

But the Fronde had brought upon the country a war with Spain, most distressing to Anne

of Austria (who was a sister of Philip IV.). It had been the dream of her life that her son should marry his cousin, the Spanish Infanta. This seemed now impossible, and Mazarin received overtures for the marriage of Louis with Marguerite of Savoy, and favoured them so far as to arrange a meeting between that Princess and the King at Lyons. Marie and Hortense Mancini accompanied the French Court to Lyons, and it was here that Louis made an ineffectual stand against the will of his governor.

He could not marry the Savoyard Princess, for he loved the Cardinal's niece, and they were pledged to each other. He begged Mazarin to allow him to marry Marie, and even threw himself upon his knees before him.

His niece took a more daring attitude. She defied her uncle. "You cannot coerce the King of France; in the last event he will do as he chooses. He has promised to marry me, and he will keep his word."

They might have gained the day had not the Spanish envoy arrived most inopportunistly, bringing King Philip's offer of the Infanta and *peace*. Mazarin had conquered, for the Infanta's dowry was to be the provinces which Spain disputed with France.

Anne of Austria was overjoyed, and Louis was made to understand that he must sacrifice himself for the good of the nation.

Mazarin took Marie and Hortense, as has been said, to Saint Jean d'Angely, and then hurried on to the Spanish frontier for the conference with Don Luis de Haro. His letters to both his niece and to Louis at this time are triumphs of diplomacy and tact, playing skilfully on the theme of honour.

The King had visited Marie in disguise, and Mazarin's spies informed him of the fact. He wrote Louis¹ reproachfully but kindly, repeating all the arguments which had won him, and showing him that negotiations had gone too far for him to draw back from the Spanish marriage, nor does he imagine that the King has any intention of doing so.

"And yet," he adds, "my niece has more assurance than ever that she has the power to dispose of your affection after this new proof that you have given her. I ask you what she hopes to do after you are married? Has she forgotten her duty so far as to believe that I could be so infamous as to allow her to become your mistress?"

"You must not reply, as you did in the presence of the Queen, that your intention of marrying her had for its principal motive the witnessing to all the world

¹ This letter is authentic.

that you could not sufficiently recompense my services, for no one would believe you.

“Nor could I—though charmed by a proposition so advantageous to myself—consent to it at your expense. I protest that I would die with grief if a person who belonged to me could cause you such prejudice with your subjects.”

Having shown that his marriage with the Infanta is inevitable, he begs him not to make miserable by dishonourable conduct the lives of all concerned, and especially his own; concluding with the argument that a man's affections are, or should be, under his own control.

“All this being evident, it is incomprehensible to me that you should use every expedient to inflame this passion when you are on the eve of marrying, and so make yourself the most miserable of men, for *there is no wretchedness comparable to marriage against one's heart!*”

Louis submitted to the fallacious arguments supported in so paradoxical a manner by a truth which he keenly felt, and Mazarin must be held in great part responsible for all the sin and heartbreak which followed that loveless marriage.

The Cardinal's letters to Marie were even more delicately subtle, showing a wonderful knowledge of a woman's heart. He protested

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his deep affection and profound admiration of her, assuming, as he did with Louis, that she had accepted the situation; and he praised her self-abnegation in preferring the peace of France, the well-being of its people, and the glory of the man she loved to her own happiness.

He assured her that he had never doubted her spirit or her influence over the King; that it would have been perfectly easy for her to have attained this unworthy ambition, for which her husband would in the end have cursed her, and in clutching at his love have lost it; but that now the King would esteem her all his life as a saint, and would never cease to love her, while the unconscious French people in their prayers of thanksgiving would call down a thousand benedictions on the unknown cause of their felicity. As for himself, the Cardinal protested that his life should be devoted to making her happy. He begged her for her consolation to read (not the Bible, but) the classics, and sent her his copy of Seneca's *Disdain of Riches*, in which he had marked many passages.

The girl's heart was broken. She remained with Hortense, hearing faint echoes of the magnificent festivals which celebrated the

marriage of Louis XIV.; but Mazarin felt that it was not safe for her to reside in France, and at the end of a year arranged a marriage for her with Prince Colonna. "She departed for Rome," says a writer of the day, "in the midst of great magnificence, having the bearing of a condemned criminal led to execution."

A similar disappointment had been met by Hortense, for the Cardinal, maintaining that he had been tricked by Mademoiselle, refused to stand by the compact made with her. With keen discrimination he had read Charles's character,—“indolent, debonair, dissimulating, fickle, sensual,”—and, believing that he would never be more than a pretender to the English throne, he advised Louis to render him no assistance; and De Haro, following Mazarin's lead, refused to permit Condé to leave Spain with a contingent of Spanish troops. The event proved that both ministers had made a mistake, for, to the astonishment of Europe, a royalist reaction had arisen in England, and in the following spring (1660) Charles was recalled by Parliament without conditions, and entered London amid the ringing of bells and the acclamations of a populace mad with joy.

His request for the hand of Hortense Man-

cini was not renewed, for his marriage was now a matter of statecraft involving national alliance.

The other nieces of the Cardinal were established one by one, but Hortense was evidently his favourite, and she did not seem willing to part from him. One thing fretted the great man,—his name could not be carried down the ages by a son, and his nephew had been killed fighting against Condé in the battle of the Porte Saint Antoine. Leaning upon the arm of Hortense, Mazarin dragged himself through his long galleries and murmured to himself, "Whose shall these things be?" for he had heard within his soul a warning call that could not be disregarded.

Of all the young nobles of the day, the Duc de Meilleraye had attracted his attention as sincerely religious and of an abnormal refinement. Mazarin did not recognise in the young man's unworldliness a fanaticism which was to develop into insanity. He felt only that here was a pure, true nature, to whom he could trust the guardianship of his irresponsible niece and the gift of his immense wealth. He asked only that the young man should assume the title of Duc de Mazarin, and he hurried on his espousals to Hortense. They

took place in the grandest room of his sumptuous palace, in front of his favourite painting (*The Marriage of Saint Catherine*), Louis XIV. assisting at the ceremony. Nine days later the picture was shrouded in crape, and Hortense's wedding trousseau was changed to mourning, for the iron will that had controlled all others had yielded to a higher power, and "ten thousand masses" were ordered to be said for the repose of the soul of Jules Mazarin.

He played his *rôle* so well that he won for himself the reputation of disinterestedness in the opinion of his contemporaries; but his successful matchmaking had broken the hearts of his nieces and changed honest lovers into profligate monarchs.

The Duc de Mazarin speedily developed insanity, and began to mutilate the Cardinal's statues and paintings.

He dragged his wife from her bed one night to the cistern in the cellar. "I let the discoloured antique statues soak there for a month," he muttered, "and when I took them out they were pure as snow. Perhaps if I plunge you under the water and keep you there long enough, you, too, may become pure and white of soul."

Hortense protested with frantic shrieks and

was rescued by their servants, but it was impossible for her to live longer with such a husband in the palace which her uncle had bequeathed to them, and, assisted by her brother-in-law, the Duc de Bouillon, she fled one night, taking with her only her jewels. Accompanied by her maid, and both disguised in masculine attire, she traversed Europe on horseback and joined her sister, the Princess de Colonna, at Rome. Here her more adventurous spirit inflamed that of Marie, and she, too, deserted her husband, the two "ladies of the flying heart" taking wing together and returning to Antwerp, where they communicated with their royal lovers. But Marie had counted again in vain on Louis's affection. It was now utterly dead, and he was in the height of his infatuation for La Vallière. He made no attempt to take her under his protection, if, indeed, it was not by his connivance that she was betrayed into the power of her husband, arrested, and conveyed to Spain, where she died in the prison of the Alcazar of Segovia.

Hortense was more lucky, and, escaping the agents of the Duc de Mazarin, reached England, where she presented herself openly at the Court of Charles II. Even slander does

not accuse her of any intrigue with the King, for he was absorbed by other passions, but he received her with friendliness and granted her a small pension. For years she was the centre of French society, of which there was a large coterie in London; and she died peacefully at last in her home in South Kensington, "regretted and loved," says St. Evremond, "by all who knew her."

Lely painted her portrait as one of the reigning beauties of the day. This portrait has all the characteristics of the Hampton Court group, so well described by a poet of the period:

"In days of ease when now the weary sword
Was sheathed, and luxury with Charles restored,
The soldier breathed the gallantries of France,
'And every flowery courtier writ romance;
Lely on animated canvas stole
The sleepy eye that spoke the melting soul."

One wonders whether the slant glances of those almond eyes were a mannerism of the painter, or a languorous ogling rendered fashionable by some especially fascinating fair one, but all, from the Duchess of Portsmouth to Hortense Mancini, regard us with the same somnolent indifference to our praise or blame.



HORTENSE DE MANCINI.

From an engraving from her portrait by Sir Peter Lely.

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Les demoiselles du cœur volant have ceased to beat their wings against their cages or to fly to their own destruction. Their story is hardly a profitable one, but it is well authenticated, typical of the time, and very pitiable.

La Grande Mademoiselle herself, despite her generous nature and her high ideals, was fated never to be truly happy. Leaving Saint Fargeau; she established herself after her father's death at the Luxembourg, and her statue now stands in the garden where she wandered so often. Of all her lovers, the Grand Condé was probably the most honest, but though he returned to Chantilly, pardoned by Louis for the part taken during the Fronde, he saw Mademoiselle but seldom, for the Princess, his wife, disappointed all expectation by living to a green old age.

The sad mockery of true love which made our heroine late in life the dupe of a heartless scoundrel, the Duc de Lauzun, is too well known to be dwelt upon in these pages. One sympathises with the Prince de Condé when he declares, "I shall attend the wedding if invited, but I shall take my loaded pistols with me and blow out the rascal's brains, for never shall a daughter of the house of Bourbon be so disgraced!" And one quite regrets the fine

self-control of Louis XIV., which prompted him, when exasperated by De Lauzun's insolence, to throw his cane out of the window "to save himself from striking a gentleman."

The secret marriage was inevitably an unhappy one, and, disillusioned at last, she gave him his liberty without taking back the benefits which she had heaped upon him, and receiving in return brutality and curses instead of thanks.

The Bastille and Pignerol were not too bad for such a man, and, in view of his turpitude, the flights of imagination of the steward of Saint Fargeau seem a reasonable and gentle schooling, which might have been productive of salutary results. Only at Saint Fargeau do the wild adventures of Mademoiselle's varied career seem anything but the inventions of the romancer; but, read in the shadow of the grim Tour de Trésor, it is the nineteenth century which becomes unreal and ghost-like; and all the personages of the past come trooping back and we are in the frantic whirl of the Fronde, shouting our defiance to Mazarin and our loyalty to the Châtelaine of Saint Fargeau.



CHAPTER III

THE FAMOUS FÊTE AT VAUX

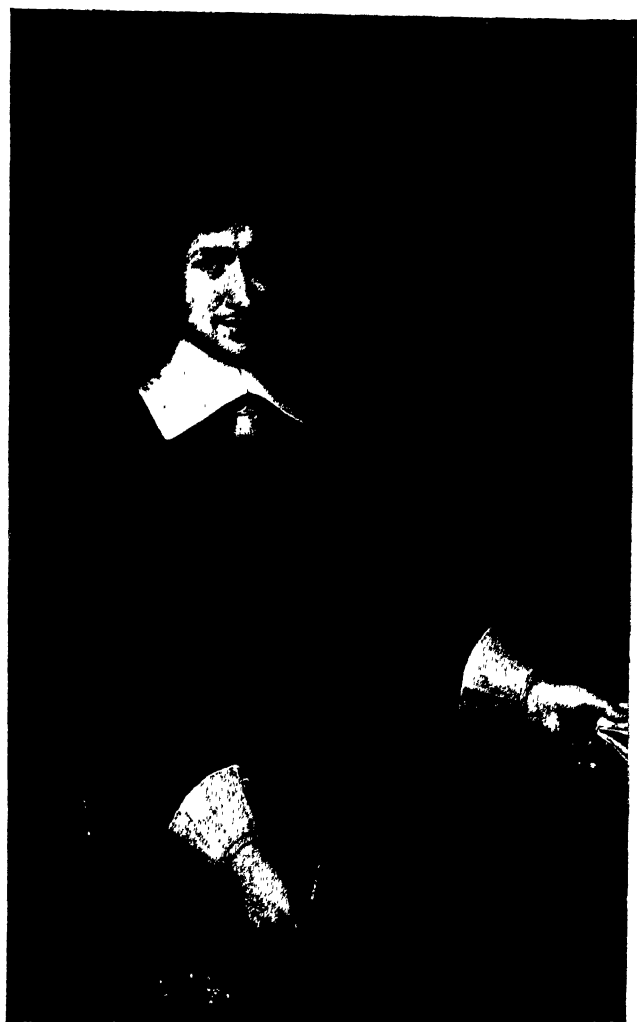
NEVER was there a more notable garden party than that given by Fouquet at Vaux, to dazzle Louis le Grand. Not only was it the most brilliant event of that period of brilliant festivities, when the *fête champêtre* reached the zenith of its magnificence, but it was the culmination of a long series of national intrigues.

Alexandre Dumas has used this famous meeting as the setting of his romance in which is told the story of the Man in the Iron Mask; but to accomplish his purpose he was compelled to distort some of the commonplace facts of history and introduce a mysterious prisoner from a royal dungeon, to whom he ascribes the relationship of brother to Louis. The King, according to Dumas, is abducted from Vaux and sent to take his brother's place in the dungeon, while the brother, who greatly

resembles him, takes his place. Excepting this violation of the probabilities, and the mythical adventures of the three musketeers, the great novelist found the characters and incidents for his story made to his hand. The elements which make the witchery of the romance and the spell of the tragedy were all there; in fact, the real is almost more wonderful than the fiction.

The private correspondence of La Fontaine and others tell how delightful was the fellowship which existed at Vaux. The château was like a little university, every man of genius was an honoured fellow, and masterpieces of literature and art sprang into being under the fostering patronage of the princely host.

Two Machiavellian minds were here pitted against each other in the combat of fierce ambition. Fouquet on the one hand, with his unlimited presumption, his daring, and his munificence; on the other, Colbert, with his indomitable will, a relentless idea of justice, and the vindictiveness of personal hate. All these elements gave to the game played between the two the foredoom of inexorable fate. This stage-setting and these characters, the war of interests, developing through plot and counterplot, make a story of more absorbing



FOUQUET.

interest, when stripped to the nudity of absolute truth, than when disguised by Dumas's trappings of fiction. Nor is there lacking the tender touch of true love to waken the pity which always waits on genuine overmastering passion and self-forgetful devotion.

The central figure, in theatrical effect, was Louis the Great, who was the most ardent worshipper of the outward attributes of glory that ever lived—a man whose very soul was eaten through and through with a passion for display and ostentatious self-glorification; who took for his device the sun in full splendour. It was a strange oversight upon the part of Fouquet that he took no account of these peculiarities of his royal master. At Vaux Louis had the humiliation of seeing himself outshone in every particular. Fouquet, the dazzling comet, for a moment so blinded the eyes of all beholders that the sun in his glory was eclipsed—a crime which Louis could never forgive.

For years fate had been slowly gathering and storing the explosives to which the match was to be applied on the evening of the festival of Vaux. For years Fouquet had prospered in a career of wild extravagance and wilder ambition. He was *surintendant des*

finances, with the public funds in his control. The King was almost a puppet in his hands. Unlimited power might have remained in Fouquet's grasp if he could have contented himself in wielding that power unseen. But, instead of pulling the strings behind the curtain, he ventured upon the stage as the open rival for popularity of the lay figure that occupied the throne. Colbert, in his way as clever as Fouquet, had been longing to manipulate the wires, and it was at the time of the Vaux garden party, while Fouquet was strutting before the audience, that Colbert's opportunity came.

Just when the idea of the wonderful festival came to Fouquet's mind it is impossible to say; but from the time of his purchase of the eight hundred acres that formed the estate of Vaux, not far from Fontainebleau, the genius and the resources of the kingdom were applied to bring about the grand result—a festival the expense of which Fouquet himself was unable to estimate, but which must have mounted into the millions.

Fouquet had the good fortune to be the patron of the painter, Charles Le Brun, who introduced him to his old fellow-student, André Le Nôtre, the first landscape gardener

to raise his profession from little more than a menial occupation to the dignity of an art. Le Nôtre was a man of great ideas, which hitherto he had had no opportunity of developing. He occupied a subordinate position under his father, who was superintendent of the Tuileries. The superintendent had desired that his son should be an artist, and had placed him in the studio of Simon Vouet, where his fellow-pupils—Le Brun, Le Sueur, and Mignard—declared that he evinced sufficient talent to outstrip them all had he so desired; but he quietly bided his time as an undergardener, drawing a small salary "for the care of an *espalier* of Spanish jasmine and white mulberries on a terrace which stretches along the Rue de Rivoli."

Fouquet, when he gave State accounts his attention, may have noticed this item, though it is more probable that the lover of flowers and hater of strict bookkeeping was struck by the arrangement of the *espalier* itself in his walks along the terrace. Le Nôtre was forty years old when he stepped from the jasmine terrace to the gardens of Vaux. It was the first in a long series of wonderful achievements culminating in the gardens of Versailles. There was hardly an estate of importance in France

to which he did not afterward put his transforming touch. But for years unknown and uninterrupted, with practically unlimited resources at his command, he pursued the elaboration of his first inspiration at Vaux.

Had there been no Le Nôtre there could have been no such festival, and Molière, La Fontaine, Le Brun, Mignard, Poussin, Puget, and Vatel would have missed their recognition.

Le Nôtre had a modest room at the château, and, overseeing his army of nine hundred labourers during the day, sat at night under the great dome of the central hall with his *dilettante* host and applauded the poems and witty writings of the "Society of Epicureans," who were the guests of the house during that period. Fouquet's first work was to remove his twenty-seven thousand volumes to the library of Vaux, and it was this room that was devoted to his literary guests. There La Fontaine sat and read and wrote for months at a time; and there Molière, unrecognised yet as a dramatist and known only as a comedian, came for shorter intervals. Le Vau, the leading architect of the time, was meanwhile carrying on the construction of the château above their heads, and Charles Le

Brun, subsidised during those four years by a generous salary, was painting the frescos which still ornament the ceilings. One can imagine the Epicureans stepping from the library to crane their necks at Le Brun on his scaffolding, touching in the Morpheus and the poppies which were destined to hang over the King's bed in the state bedchamber, palatial as that at Fontainebleau. At a dizzier height Le Brun painted, in the interior of the noble dome, the eagle from whose claws was to be suspended the gilded chain holding the great lustre.

With the help of the Court portrait-painter, Mignard, Le Brun had a still more interesting and delicate mission to fulfil. Fouquet had the reputation of being irresistible as a ladies' man. He made more magnificent presents than the King himself; besides, he was far handsomer and more entertaining. It was one of his ambitions that the portrait gallery at Vaux should be unique in the history of art. Among other things it was to be a gallery of the reigning beauties of the day. No sooner did a lady attain some reputation for beauty at Court than Le Brun or Mignard was sent, with the request that she would do the superintendent of finance the honour to allow

her portrait to be painted for his gallery. The request was always accompanied by a valuable present in jewels, and was couched in such flattering terms that it was seldom refused. Indeed, it came at length to be considered an honour, or *cachet* for beauty, to be coveted and envied. Prior to the garden party the secrets of the gallery were kept carefully guarded, and many were the rumours and heart-burnings as to who was, and who was not, thought worthy to be included in the collection.

La Vallière was the rising star at Court. Fouquet's collection was certainly not complete without her portrait, and bets were laid by the courtiers as to whether he would succeed in obtaining it.

Le Brun's position was no sinecure. Besides the frescos and the portraits, he had the supervision of the manufacture of the tapestries. Many of these were from his own designs; but he had also as a colleague in this department, Philippe Lallement of Reims, a landscape-painter of note, and Beaudrain, a Parisian artist. A colony of Flemish tapestry-workers was imported and settled in *ateliers* at Mains, a village on the estate near the château; and here, under the superintend-

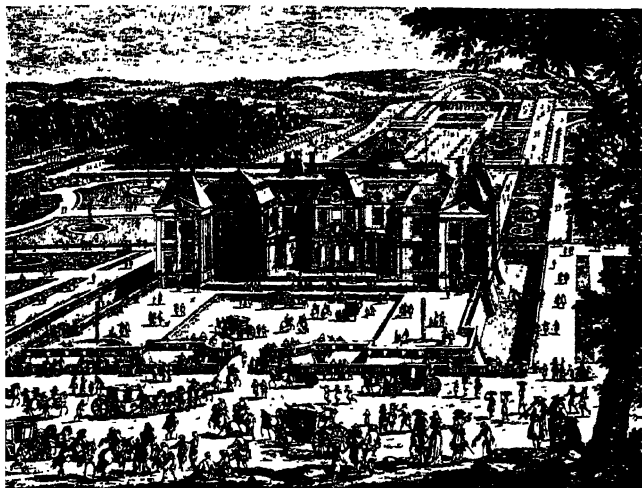
ence of Le Brun, they executed the superb series of hangings which adorns the walls of the château to this day. This manufactory was the precursor of the Gobelins, established a little later by Colbert, and both the idea and the workmen were taken thither by him from Vaux.

There must have been interesting conferences between the architect Le Vau and the sculptor Legendre, who had charge of the ornate stucco work, before the tapestries or even the frescos could find their place; and the wood-carver Gittard, and the fine cabinet-worker and maker of marquetry, Jacques Pron, rivalled each other in their exquisite workmanship.

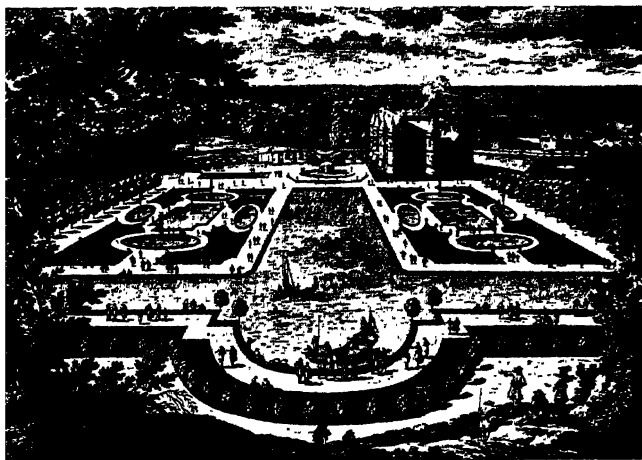
While Le Nôtre, doubtless, was interested in these forms of applied art within the château, his own field was far more vast than that of any of his confrères, not even excepting the designs and superintendence of Le Brun. He had begun, as every true artist begins, by giving rein to his imagination. Long before, as he paced within the narrow bounds of his jasmine *espalier*, he had beheld stretching before him the vision of that noble vista which any one may see to-day as he stands on the terrace in front of the château

of Vaux. It is exactly the same panorama which dazzled the eyes of the astonished courtiers as they were welcomed by Fouquet to the *fête* held two hundred years ago. Le Nôtre felt that his work was as truly a composition as is a symphony, a grand historical painting, or a poem. As such it must have a central thought, a definite purpose. This he accomplished in the main vista down which the vision passes by scrolls of Persian embroidery made with living flowers, long lines of sentinel-like statues, vases like rows of lilies, marble seats backed by close-clipped walls of greenery, across broad expanses of quiet water to a colossal gilded Hercules. In the far distance this figure seems no larger than a jewelled clasp, giving just the right accent of interest where sight is lost in imagination.

To accomplish all this, Le Nôtre levelled three villages and turned the course of a river. He cut down forests in certain directions and planted them in others. He drained marshes, turned farms into well-stocked hunting parks, constructed the most perfect driveways known in France, and designed an entirely new system of hydraulics for the wonderful fountains. And this was done merely to prepare the ground for another army of artists and artisans.



CHÂTEAU AND GARDENS OF VAUX.



GARDENS OF CHANTILLY.
From old engravings.

Louis XIV. was rendered vaguely uneasy by what he heard. On his return from his marriage with the Infanta at Saint Jean de Luz he visited Vaux. His jealousy was aroused, although Fouquet apologised for not being able to entertain the King fittingly at such short notice, and asked permission to give a festival to the monarch and the Court the following year. The permission was granted, for Louis, already suspicious that Fouquet was profiting by his position to appropriate public funds, was curious to see to what lengths he would go.

Soon after, he set Colbert upon Fouquet's track as a detective, with Fouquet's position as a reward if he were proved guilty.

The day of the 17th of August, 1661, arrived, and the Court, which was then at Fontainebleau, drove to Vaux. Six thousand invitations had been issued. The guests were received by Fouquet. He led them first to the gardens, whose enormous extent afforded ample space for the multitude. Hitherto gardens had been comparatively small enclosed plots. When the guests passed through the château and stood upon the terrace, with the wonderful vista stretching before them, they were astounded.

The Court wandered about, enchanted, delighted, and surprised. At the right was a maze such as had never before been constructed in France; at the left, a cascade. On the beautiful *pièce d'eau* which crossed the garden at right angles, gilded boats, tended by nymphs, were ready to carry them far into the forest. Everywhere were grottos, statues, *bosquets*, marble balustrades with vases of exquisite shape, and a profusion of colour and perfume in the flower-beds. Shadowy avenues led into the forest. Musicians, carefully secreted, filled the air with delightful sounds. Swans glided upon the ponds; fish brought from the ends of Europe disported in the waters. Wonder upon wonder was disclosed to view.

Having inspected the gardens, Fouquet led the way to the château, pausing first in the magnificent domed rotunda, then escorting the King through the charming suites of apartments. Louis could hardly contain himself at the sight of such luxury and elegance.

After viewing the house each of the guests received a ticket for a lottery, each number drawing a prize. The ladies all received jewels, the gentlemen arms. After that came the call to supper, which was furnished by the

famous Vatel at a cost of one hundred and twenty thousand livres. The King and the nobles ate from four hundred and thirty-two services of gold.

From the supper-table the guests passed to an *al-fresco* theatre arranged in the park, with scenery painted by Le Brun. There Molière's play, *Les Fâcheux*, written and learned for the occasion in fifteen days, was given, with a poetical prologue by La Fontaine. This was followed by a ballet with ingenious transformation scenes, in which antique statues opened and disclosed dazzling nymphs of the theatre.

When Colbert wandered through the rooms a surprise met him. Everywhere in the decorations Le Brun had painted, at Fouquet's instigation, Colbert's own device—the viper, but not in any spirit of compliment. In each painting the viper was depicted as about to strike, menacing a squirrel, which was Fouquet's device; but the squirrel always frisked away in a taunting manner, exciting its enemy to impotent rage. The allegory was as plain to Colbert as to every one else. It was Fouquet's bold defiance to his hated rival. Colbert showed the decoration to the King, with Fouquet's own motto, "*Quo non ascendam ?*"

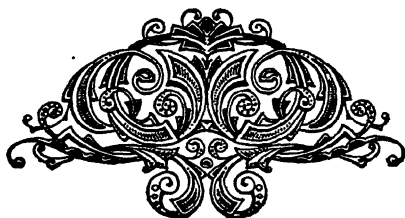
("to what shall I not ascend?"), typified so well by the climbing squirrel. It is probable that he desired to be prime minister, but popular tradition gives a more romantic goal to his aspirations. The King's infatuation for La Vallière was an open secret, though she had proved hard to win. Fouquet's universal adoration had paid its customary tribute at her shrine, and Court gossip had found this rivalry a racy topic. La Vallière's portrait in Fouquet's gallery of beauties, in connection with the "*Quo non ascendam?*" sealed his doom.

Three days later came the arrest of Fouquet, followed by the long trial for his life.

His downfall came at last. The charge of high treason was so illy proved that the sentence was only banishment—a penalty which the King was able to change to perpetual imprisonment. The lover of flowers and gardens passed thirteen long years, and died, in a narrow dungeon.

Not only did Louis XIV. unscrupulously rob Fouquet of all his material possessions, but he plagiarised every one of Fouquet's ingenious ideas. The *fête* of Vaux was the precursor of a series of brilliant festivals given at Versailles in honour of La Vallière. They

bore the same relation in magnificence to their model as the gardens of the palace do to those of the château, and with the same disproportion in their results, since Vaux ruined only Fouquet, while Versailles ruined France.





CHAPTER IV

ANDRÉ LE NÔTRE AND THE CHÂTEAU GARDENS OF LOUIS XIV.

ANDRÉ LE NÔTRE, gardener of the King, and king of gardeners, was the first to achieve for himself lasting renown as a landscape architect, and to lift the profession of gardening, until then little more than a menial occupation, to the dignity of an art.

Born in 1615 and dying in 1700, his career coincided very nearly with that of his sovereign, to whose glory he greatly added, for Louis without Versailles would have been stripped of his external attributes of magnificence, and Versailles could never have existed but for the genius of Le Nôtre.

To know and love this masterpiece of his fascinating art one should spend a summer in its neighbourhood and visit it daily under varying aspects, choosing for each visit some particular *bosquet*, or garden within the gar-



STATUE OF LE NÔTRE AT CHANTILLY.

den, discovering new regions without the aid of the officious guide, strolling down the *allées* in pleasant company or alone, as the mood prompts. Through this intimate acquaintance one realises that the great garden is not alone a theatre for the display of the pomp of rule and the parade of courtly pageants, but that it holds an infinitude of stage-settings appropriate to the dramas of every age and harmonising with every mood. Here are *boulingrins* (bowling-greens) where the boys may tumble; wildernesses for the lover of solitude and of nature; beautiful marbles for the sculptor; enchanting effects for the landscape-painter, secluded nooks for the student and the poet; labyrinths walled in box, where children may play hide-and-seek; and historic spots, the scenes of memorable events, where the dreamer can fancy that he sees the rouged and powdered favourites flitting like butterflies among the roses, or catches the pathetic smile of La Vallière, Marie Leczinska, or Marie Antoinette.

"Spring is the only season in which to visit Versailles," we exclaim, as we come back to it after a winter's absence and see the light filtering through the tender, sparse foliage, and the terminal buds of the later trees blending

a purple blur with the silvery greens. But the charm grows more potent as we linger till August, when the flowers are one riot of flamboyant colour against the rich tapestry greens of midsummer, and nature, in her sumptuous luxuriance, revives the splashes of crimson and the glint of gold with which the velvets and brocades of Louis's Court once glorified the scene. Then the tide of passionate colour ebbs, and how is it possible to tear one's self away in witching October, when the lovely haze of autumn veils and softens the long, straight lines with its touch of mystery, while the falling leaves fleck the violet haze with touches of pale gold as they float softly down and carpet the long *allées*?

The eye delights in the great *coup d'œil* from the Parterre d'Eau and feels the dignity and the harmony of the plan, the greatness of conception displayed in the grandiose proportions, the majesty of that vista where the view is led on and on until it loses itself in the mystery of distance, where marble staircases lead down from balustraded terraces to the imposing sheet of water; and (as the de Goncourts wrote of the pictures of Watteau) "arches of verdure open like the side scenes of a theatre, and great forests roll up their



LOUIS XIV.

From a steel engraving made by permission of the King.

shade, their evanescent foliage touched with sparkling statues, women of marble and children of stone and fountains enveloped in rain."

One feels then the design of the place—that it is a magnificent out-of-door drawing-room, "for grave and solemn promenades and for *fêtes* of royal splendour." There never lived a more theatrical monarch than Louis XIV. and the immense expanses of Versailles were intended for pageants for which the great palace was too small a theatre. Fouquet's princely *fête*, which was the occasion of the downfall of that brilliant and wily minister of finance, was Le Nôtre's *début*, the first step in the long staircase of wonderful opportunity and achievement; and the friendships which Le Nôtre formed at Vaux with the artists, sculptors, and literary men who were Fouquet's guests as well as employees, lasted through the remainder of his life. All of these men were unscrupulously confiscated by Louis, and were associated in the same way at Versailles.

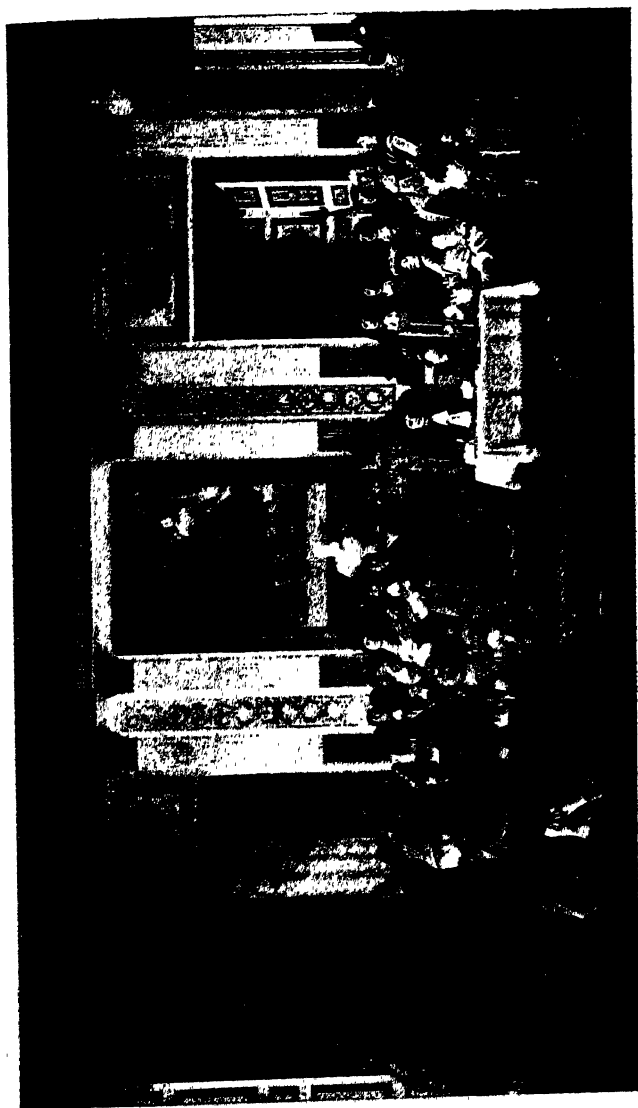
For nearly four years (January, 1658–August, 1661) these congenial workers had laboured together at Vaux. The triumvirate by which the little kingdom was governed consisted of the architect Le Vau, who built

the château; Charles Le Brun, who had charge to all its decorations; and Le Nôtre, who designed and superintended the work upon the grounds. Louis's haste to appropriate the genius that he recognised is shown by a comparison of the following dates: Fouquet's disgrace was planned between Colbert and the King at the *fête*; his arrest followed on the 5th of September; on the fourteenth Le Nôtre signed his name on the register of the church of St. Roch, at the baptism of his daughter, Jeanne Françoise, under the title of "Conseiller du Roi et Controlleur Général de ses Bastiments et Jardins." Nine days after the performance of *Les Fâcheux* at Vaux, Molière repeated it for the King at Fontainebleau; and four months later Charles Le Brun was created "Director of the Manufactory of Royal Tapestries [at the Gobelins] and First Painter to the King." The Hôtel des Gobelins was purchased on the 6th of January, 1662, and Fouquet's superb collection of tapestries, together with the colony of tapestry-workers, removed thither.

At the same time the idea of Versailles developed itself in Louis's mind. During the reign of Louis XIII. this palace was only a hunting-lodge in the midst of the forest; but



Louis XIV. and Molière
"The Man whom the King Delighteth to Honor"
From a painting by H. J. Vetter
(By permission of Neudruck-Verlag, Paris)



on the birth of Louis XIV., his father (in honour of the event) had a garden laid out and named it "the Bosquet Dauphin." In 1651 Louis XIV., then in his thirteenth year, came here for the first time on a hunting expedition with Cardinal Mazarin, and was entertained so agreeably by President Maisons, then captain of the château, that the place became his favourite resort, and Boyceau extended the garden by means of nineteen *bosquets*. Louis now determined to recompense himself for the mortification which he had received in seeing himself eclipsed by Fouquet, and accordingly constructed gardens which out-shine any in the history of the world. He gave Le Nôtre absolute *carte blanche* in the matter of expenditure. As they walked together through the old parterres, and Le Nôtre explained, "I will have a grand terrace, a *pièce d'eau* there; avenues of such width and length here, and here," Louis, delighted, exclaimed at each detail, "I will give you twenty thousand livres for that, and twenty more for that." "Enough, sire," Le Nôtre replied; "your Majesty shall know no more or I shall ruin you."

And the presage was fulfilled. Le Nôtre was honest to the last penny, giving scrupulous account of the vast sums which passed

through his hands. Though he became rich in his profession, no one can complain that his labours were overpaid; but his enthusiasm for his art was unbounded, and, the King's admiration keeping pace with his *protégé's* fertility of invention, the treasury of the nation could not stand the demands made upon it without a ruinous system of taxation. Even the genius of that master of finance, Colbert, was unable to avert the coming disaster which overtook France, and which is partly chargeable to the sumptuous creations of Le Nôtre.

Sensual, fickle, and absolutely unscrupulous, Louis, once emancipated from Mazarin's tutelage, never hesitated in acquiring any coveted object, or in casting it aside when the fancy palled. Just now he was enamoured with the lovely La Vallière, and his impatience could not await the completion of the gardens to give a *fête* in her honour which would make Fouquet's tribute tawdry and ridiculous in comparison. Le Nôtre was pushed to hasten the work into a temporary appearance of completion, and in October of 1663 the first of the series of La Vallière *fêtes* was given. It was for this occasion that Molière composed his *Impromptu de Ver-*

sailles; and later many of his plays were arranged with Le Nôtre's help, for the *al-fresco* theatre. Lulli, promoted from the employ of La Grande Mademoiselle to the leadership of the King's orchestra, gave entrancing midnight concerts. Cavalcades and knightly tournaments were planned in which La Vallière's brother carried off the prize of a diamond-hilted sword. Another day the King himself acted as Roger the Enchanter in an extravaganza called *Les Plaisirs de l'Île Enchantée*. This was a fairy ballet, given on an island in the middle of the Bassin d'Apollon. The spectators were seated around the margin, and the enchanted palace and the other stage-setting disappeared at the close of the performance in an eruption of fireworks. The various scenes are represented with amusing *naïveté* in nine engravings made for Louis by the engraver Silvestre. Especially remarkable are the mechanical marine monsters which swam about in the basin. Some in the audience maintained that they were live whales which the Biscayans had sent to the King; others, that the carp of Fontainebleau had fed on some newly discovered food, which had bloated them to this gigantic size.

Out-of-door banquets, dancing, serenades,

and amusements of every imaginable sort followed these comedies. The *fêtes* were repeated at intervals throughout the King's reign, with the only difference that they were given to other favourites. La Vallière, won and abandoned, died in her convent; and the magnificent festival of 1668, with three thousand guests, was in honour of her supplanter, Madame de Montespan. At this *fête* the novelties of hydraulic organs and aquatic chandeliers was introduced, the illuminated fountains discoursing their own music. Louis's last garden *fêtes* were given in 1674, to celebrate the reduction of Franche Comté. The *Iphigénie* of Racine was played in the Orangerie; there was a ride with flambeaux through the park; a naval display on the grand canal; and a presentation to the King of one hundred and seven flags taken by Condé.

All of this time the palace and garden of Versailles had been steadily growing. Jules Hardouin Mansart had taken the place of Le Vau, and gradually developed his scheme for the immense palace as we see it to-day. Le Brun continued director-in-chief of interior and exterior decorations, having under him an army of able sculptors, painters, and artists in every craft. Coysevox, Coustou, Girardon

and others chiselled their masterpieces from glittering marble, Tuby and Caffieri from bronze and brass; Keller founded in lead the silvery statues of the fountains; Van Cleve filled the ceilings and cornices with his charming creations in stucco; and the frescos and canvases of the painters of the *grand siècle* displayed the apotheosis of the Sun King, while the manufactory of the Gobelins poured forth its marvels of tapestry.

The gardens kept pace with the palace; and it is a pleasanter task to trace the labours of the artists in the making of Versailles than the intrigues of the monarch for whom their achievement seemed at that time only the gilded frame. Le Nôtre had hardly been employed upon Versailles before Louis ennobled him and presented him with the order of St. Michel. When asked to choose a device for his coat of arms, he playfully replied, "I have my device already: three snails, with a cabbage leaf for a crest." He was gifted with such perfect tact that, though an intruder in their ranks, the nobility received him with cordiality, and he became one of the best beloved, as well as one of the most admired men of the time. La Quintinie, though a German Lutheran, had been called from Vaux

to be florist-in-chief, and, with the resources at his disposition, scored a great advance in the history of horticulture. He was an experimentalist, and left works on fruit trees which were long the standard authority on this subject. Before his time, the orange tree was extremely rare in France. Tradition says that an orange was sent from Spain to a princess of Navarre, who planted its seeds; and a box, containing the five trees thus produced,—the first ever seen in France,—was given from one great personage to another, until it came into the possession of the Constable de Bourbon. On the confiscation of his goods, Francis I. ordered the five trees, now grown into one, sent to Fontainebleau, where it was called “the Grand Bourbon.” Louis, possibly on account of its name, had a great affection for the tree and had it removed to Versailles. Fortunately, this was after the disastrous experiment with Pouquet’s two hundred orange trees, which were all winter-killed from having been stupidly planted *en pleine terre*.

The movable green boxes, which are still seen in the parks of Paris, were an expedient of La Quintinie. Hothouses were first used by him in France, having been recently invented by the Dutch; and he imported a

quantity of Dutch bulbs. The hothouses were at first a secret, and the Court were astonished by La Quintinie's marvellous power of serving asparagus and green peas (of which the King was gluttonously fond) out of season.

Le Nôtre transplanted not only twelve hundred and thirty of the trees of Vaux to Versailles; but the King caused also the greater part of the statuary to be removed thither. A faithful domestic buried the Antinous—a fine bronze antique—in the cellar, and so secured it for the son of the master who sold it, and after many wanderings it was finally acquired by the King of Prussia, and is now at Sans Souci. The Gaulois Hercules, ordered from Puget, and which was to have been the chief ornament of Vaux, was not finished at the time of the *fête*. Colbert secured it for the gardens which Le Nôtre laid out for him at Sceaux, whence it was removed to the Luxembourg and finally to the Louvre. Two Egyptian sarcophagi, from the upper Nile, also escaped the general exodus from Vaux to Versailles. Sold with certain other objects for the benefit of Fouquet's creditors, Le Nôtre himself purchased them, and for a long time they stood

in the garden of the Tuileries in front of his own apartment. These rooms, we are told by the English doctor, Lister, who visited them in 1698, "overflowed with costly paintings, antiques, medals, engravings, and with very rare Chinese porcelains and lacquers"; for Le Nôtre had a love of collecting, and was able in his later years to gratify it. He gave the two sarcophagi as a wedding present to his friend and neighbour, Bernin Valentine d'Ussé, on the occasion of his marriage to Mademoiselle Vauban, daughter of the famous military engineer; and Marshal Vauban restored for the young couple the Château d'Ussé, at the juncture of the Indre and the Loire, and made the two sarcophagi a feature of a grand terrace. Buried during the Revolution, Monsieur Edmond Bonnaffé traces the further adventures of the sarcophagi until they found their present resting-place in the Egyptian section of the Louvre.

Of Fouquet's other statues, some have been secured and restored to their place by the present owner of Vaux. The fourteen Termes of Poussin were the nucleus of the great gallery of sculpture which Versailles finally became, and there the interested searcher can find them to-day in the old *bosquets* of the

Girandole and the Dauphin. They were the advance guard of an army of statues. Ninety-five sculptors worked for the garden, with a great number of bronze and lead founders. A single item in the expenses of the year 1682 is two hundred and forty thousand livres for Italian marble. The red marble of Languedoc was also greatly used for copings, balustrades, basins, etc. The productions of the ninety-five sculptors were not deemed sufficient, and three hundred cases of antique sculptures from Rome form another entry.

The problem of supplying the fountains with water taxed Le Nôtre's ability as an engineer to the utmost, and was an enormous expense. The abandoned aqueduct,—“the Machine of Marly,”—whose complicated working only Vauban could understand, and the system at present in use have cost millions to the public treasury.

Fountains such as Le Nôtre inaugurated at Versailles were undreamed of before his advent. Fortunately, though various parts of the garden have been demolished and reconstructed, these fountains, with their superb statues and one thousand four hundred jets of water, culminating in the Bassin de Neptune, are almost unchanged, and there is no

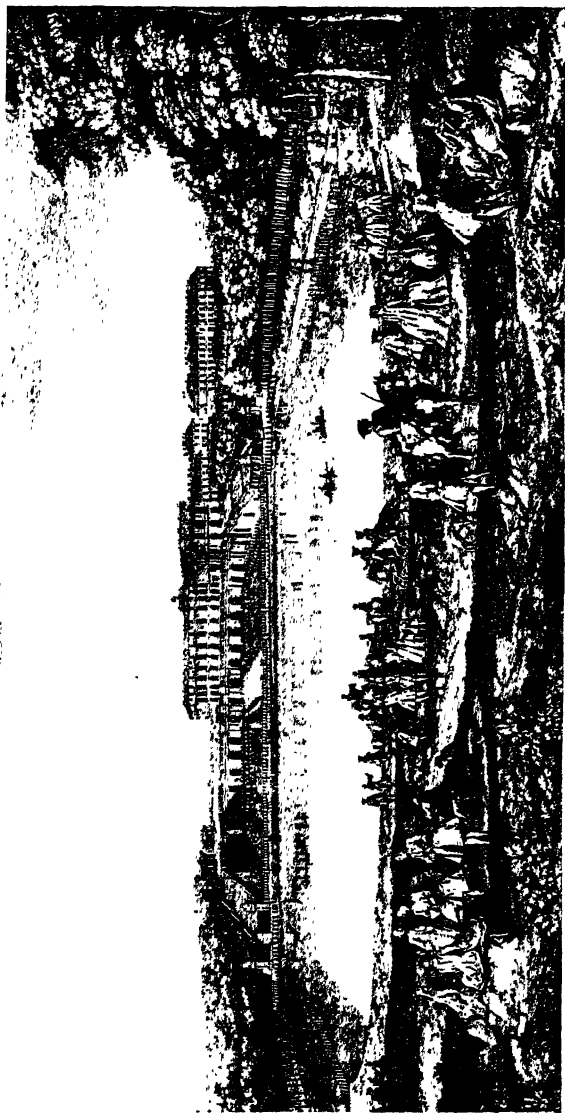
spectacle which the Parisian of every class loves so dearly as the "Grandes Eaux."

Le Nôtre's duties became more and more complex. He was entrusted with the salaries of the workmen, and even with the 7560 livres for the purchase of seven hundred and fifty-six negro slaves from the West Indies to work upon the grounds.

In the busiest part of his career he was most opportunely permitted a vacation for two years. Pope Innocent XI. desired his spiritual son to lend him his gardener to beautify the grounds of the papal palace. Mansart was temporarily deputed to take his place in France, and Le Nôtre was packed off to Rome. His letters to his friend Bontemps (as quoted by St. Simon) are full of sprightly humor, and give a *naïve* picture of his extreme intimacy with the Pope, whom he kissed on both cheeks at their first interview.

At this time Camillo Pamfili and Olimpia Maldalcini had just finished the casino of their villa, using material gathered from hundreds of ornately sculptured Roman tombs which formerly occupied this site, and Le Nôtre was entrusted with the arrangement of the grounds.

When he returned from Rome he brought



PALACE AND ORANGERY OF VERSAILLES FROM THE PIÈCE D'EAU DES SUISSES.
From an engraving of the period by Rigaud.

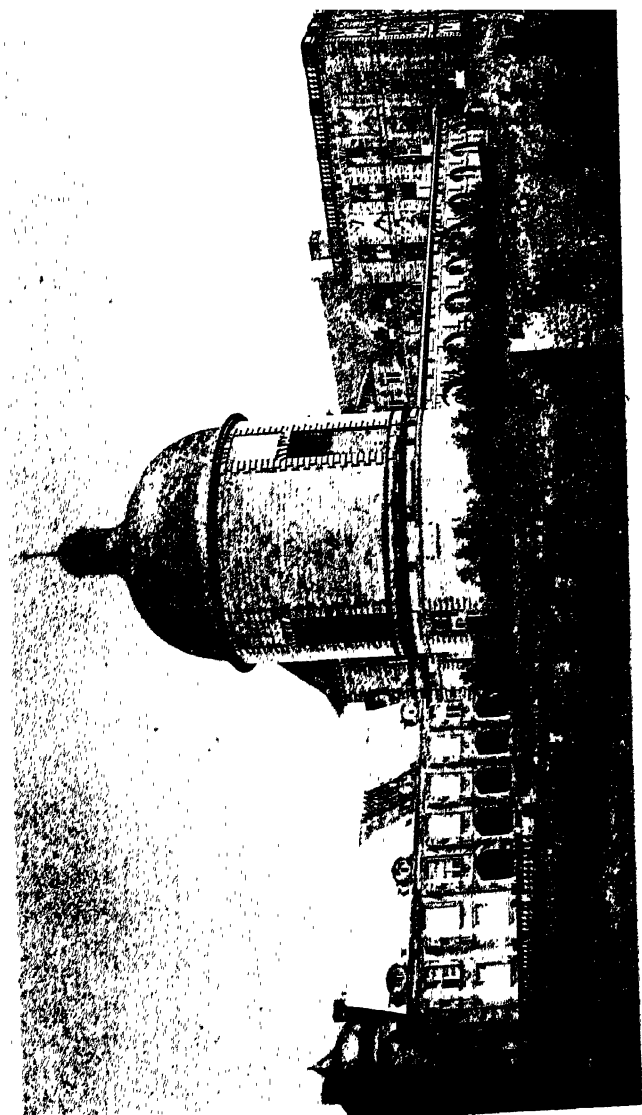
with him for Versailles the three hundred boxes of antique statues which we have noted, and three thousand orange trees for the Orangery which Mansart had built in his absence. He probably visited Venice on his return journey, for later he imported from Italy a number of gondolas and a little colony of Venetian gondoliers to ply them.

During Le Nôtre's absence Mansart had built the Colonnade, which still stands in its charming *bosquet*, and the Orangery. There is a little pique in Le Nôtre's reply, when asked by the King how he liked these constructions. They were too architectural for his taste. "One sees plainly, sire," he said, "that you have made a gardener of a stone-mason." It was the only spiteful remark assigned to him, but he need not have feared being supplanted by the popular young architect. Mansart was sent back to palace building, and the gardens were continued under the direction of Le Nôtre. Guiffrey, in his *Comptes des Bâtiments du Roi*, records a steady increase in the expenditure for this purpose from Le Nôtre's return from Italy until the end of 1688. During this period the garden was made and remade many times, for the King desired continually new sensations; and we know of many of Le

Nôtre's creations only through old engravings. *Fête* succeeded *fête* and contributed their influence to these changes. La Fontaine's affection for Molière is well known. He wrote prologues for his plays, as he did poems in praise of Le Nôtre, who helped La Fontaine's fame by planning that at each angle of his maze should stand a statue illustrating one of La Fontaine's fables, bearing the rhymed story in gilded letters. There they stood until recently,—the stork drinking from his slender-necked amphora, while the wolf gazes hungrily at the Barmecide feast; the fox and the grapes; the frogs who desired a king; the dog in the manger, and all the rest. Now only the statues of Æsop and of Cupid holding a ball of twine (to signify that love gives the clue to the labyrinths of life), remain in a *bosquet* to the right of the Allée des Marmousets to recall the famous maze, the joint work of La Fontaine and Le Nôtre.

The entire expenditure of Louis XIV. for Versailles is known to have been over a hundred million francs, to which must be added a sum which cannot be estimated, representing the forced labour of twenty to thirty thousand peasants and soldiers with their horses during more than a quarter of a century. Le

Château de Wyron



Nôtre acted as paymaster for a large proportion of this amount.

Marly, which was begun, like the Trianons, as a simple retreat from the luxuries and grandeur of Versailles, finally rivalled that palace in its appointments. Clagny, the *maison de plaisance* of Madame de Montespan, must be regarded as an appanage of Versailles. Madame de Sévigné writes of Clagny:

“You know the style of Le Nôtre; there are *allées* where one is in the shade, and to hide the boxes (which hold the orange trees) there are on either hand palisades of tuberose, roses, jasmines, and pinks—all in bloom. It is assuredly the most surprising and the most enchanting novelty which can be imagined.”

Le Nôtre was employed by Louis XIV. for forty years on the gardens of the royal châteaux,—Versailles, Trianon, Marly, St. Germain, and Fontainebleau,—actively fulfilling the innumerable duties and enormous responsibilities of his official position as Controller General of the King's Works during a period pre-eminent for its creation of palaces and pleasure-grounds, and to the perfect satisfaction of that exigent monarch, whose friendship and patronage he enjoyed until his death. His invention was inexhaustible. Hardly a

great man of the time but felt it incumbent upon him to be the patron of Le Nôtre, and to each estate he gives a different attractiveness—a style of his own.

The Prince de Condé calls him to reconstruct Chantilly. Colbert, made secure in Fouquet's place, has Le Nôtre create for him a paradise at Sceaux. The Dauphin seeks his aid in planning Meudon; the Duc d'Orleans in embellishing St. Cloud and Villers Cotterets. He lays out the gardens of Clagny for Madame de Montespan, and of Maintenon for her successful rival. He reconstructs Rambouillet for the Marquis d'Armenonville, designs Bailleul for President Lamoignon, remodels *Maisons* for the Comte de Soyecourt, and furnishes plans for, or personally superintends, many other estates.

Early in 1661 a guest had come to Vaux who was the means of introducing Le Nôtre to England. This was Henrietta Maria, wife of Charles I. of England, and mother of Charles II., who had lately been restored to his ancestral rights. The Queen, aunt of Louis XIV., had always cherished her family ties and remained French at heart. When her husband was beheaded she fled to France as an asylum, and, giving her daughter, Henriette d'Angle-

terre, a strictly French education, married her to her cousin, Philippe, Duc d'Orléans, only brother of Louis XIV. On her son's accession with Louis as his ally, her star seemed to be in the ascendant, and just before returning to England she accepted Fouquet's invitation to Vaux. Here she was fascinated with the new style of landscape gardening, and met Le Nôtre. It was this interview, doubtless, which led to the visit to England, to which Horace Walpole refers when he states, "Le Nautre, the architect of the groves and grottoes, came hither on a mission to improve our taste. He planted St. James and Greenwich Parks, no great monument of his invention." In spite of Walpole's sneers, the formal style became for a time the fashion in that country. One of Le Nôtre's pupils, Rose, was gardener-in-chief under Charles II. The Fountain Garden at Hampton Court, first laid out for Charles II., was an especially fine example of Le Nôtre's style.

His conscientiousness in the fulfilling of small, unprofitable orders, and lavish generosity in giving his time and counsel, is borne witness to by a number of contemporary writers. Madame de Sévigné tells how he aided her in the arrangement of her little

place at Livry and at her beloved Rochers in Brittany. He worked for Bossuet at Meaux (though the bishop's gardener complained that one must plant St. Chrysostoms and St. Jeromes to interest him). He designed Boileau's "Hermitage" at Auteuil. Nothing was too small for him and nothing too great. This winsome personality, the faculty of gaining and keeping all hearts, was a great factor in his success. His fame continued to spread; he went to Reims to lay out the vast grounds of the Château de Montmirail for Louvois. His designs were eagerly demanded all over Europe, and his pupils became Court gardeners in Russia, Austria, Germany, and England; while the "style of Le Nôtre" swept over Christendom, and was even adopted in the gardens of the Sultan's Seraglio at Constantinople.

The formal gardens of old France have been so extravagantly praised and, on the other hand, denounced with such authority, and the style of Le Nôtre so misunderstood, travestied, and wrangled over, that the lover of gardens, as he visits them on his French tour, would do well to consider how far in their present state they preserve their original features; what was the aim of the great landscape

architect, what the principles upon which he worked, and how far he was hindered or assisted by the style prevalent in France before he laid his transforming touch upon the great estates.

The gardens of Fontainebleau are an encyclopædia of what has been done in landscape gardening from the earliest times; and the changes which Le Nôtre instituted there, existing side by side with some of the untouched earlier gardens, show in what way his system differed from that of his predecessors. Many of his other gardens display an astonishing variety, for he invariably studied the tastes of the owner, the uses to which the château and its grounds were to be put, the conformation of the land, the available water-supply, the architecture of the château which was to be framed, and the surrounding landscape with which his work must blend. But a certain similarity does exist, comprehended in the expression, "his style," and felt in the work of every great creator, be he author, musician, or artist, even when he handles a variety of themes. Fundamentally his system was one of expansion.

Arthur Mangin, in his *Histoire des Jardins*, asserts, "Le Nôtre did not invent a new style,

but to the old gave imposing proportions, great terraces, basins, gardens of unheard-of magnificence. Even the trees became the high walls of long galleries, summer palaces of verdure in harmony with palaces of stone."

Le Nôtre's first principle was unity of design. The entire plan was as much a composition as a symphony or a poem. The carrying out of this plan involved certain minor requirements.

First among these was a general effect—a main vista; for this he obliterated hedges and united straggling parterres by broad grass-plots and long, sweeping borders, jewelled with white urns or rows of statues niched in greenery. He continued these expanses in a system of canals and lakes, and avenues cut through the encircling forest. He has given each of his château gardens this supreme effect. At Maintenon the river, after surrounding the château, is itself the shining waterway over which the eye travels,—Le Nôtre's royal road to the distance. So invariably does he make use of magnificent sheets of water that, on glancing at a map of an estate one recognises the touch of Le Nôtre by the canalisation alone.

At Rambouillet an affluent of the Eure zig-

zags in a formally constructed path. To-day the forest has swept in and filled the angles, so that there is a delightful mystery as to how the waters find their way from one arm of the canal to another.

A second minor principle always exemplified was that of *contrast*. Sometimes this was effected by the proximity of untrammelled nature,—a wild park surrounding the ornate and formal garden. Sometimes it was the contrast of vastness in the main vista with the playful ingenuity and childish littleness of the *bosquets*, the labyrinths, the mechanical devices to surprise and entertain with which he amused his *clientele*. These, while condemned to-day as unworthy of his genius, were very popular with his patrons.

In the retired portions of the garden, on either side of what might be considered the state apartment of what Vitet calls the “exterior house,” were to be concealed the more intimate compartments, summer-houses, or hermitages for the lover and the student; children’s play-grounds, exercise courses for the athlete, tennis courts, mazes, grottos, conservatories, game preserves, aviaries, pigeon-houses, poultry yards, leading on to the kennels and to the stables, the stock farm, and

the park,—all of which were not supposed to interest the general public, but might be shown by the host to fanciers of each speciality.

Monsieur Delerot writes: "They reproach Le Nôtre unjustly for having introduced topiary gardening: on the contrary, he caused its disappearance. He loved regularity, majestic unity, and richness, but also good sense and reason."

At the château of Marimont in Holland topiary gardening reached its height in statues, cut in yews, of men-at-arms and horses. These foolish green statues gave place in Le Nôtre's system to great avenues; the parterres and scroll-work of sand and brick dust to a sea of flowers. He is quoted as having said that he did not like parterres, even when constructed of flowers, "because they could be walked on only by the eyes." Everywhere that his patrons would permit he substituted *boulingrins*, or wide expanses of turf, more restful to the sight than the intricate flourishes of gaudy colour, and to be freely trodden under foot of all.

Madame de Sévigné, after consulting with Le Nôtre and obtaining designs from him, began her changes at Les Rochers "by pulling up those edgings of dwarf box so delectable in

the eyes of the courtiers of Louis XIII. "This is something," she wrote to her daughter, "that our garden of holly would never have dreamed of becoming."

His pupil, Le Blond, who laid out Peterhof for Peter the Great, crystallised his precepts into a set of laws for French landscape gardeners, gives among others:

"Do not encumber your garden with too highly decorated fountains, with exaggerated porticos executed in trellis-work, with numerous stone staircases; but, on the contrary, multiply lawns, grassy slopes, and place your lakes in the lower part of your grounds in order that they may seem natural.

"Do not render your gardens sad and sombre with too many trees.

"Do not fall into the opposite excess and leave the garden absolutely bare and exposed, so that all parts of it can be seen from the vestibule of the edifice.

"Give an idea of more extended space than in reality exists in small parks, by glimpses across other estates, and for this end use ha-has (sunken ditches) as boundaries instead of obstructing walls.

"Lastly, before executing a design, think carefully what the garden will become in twenty or thirty years, and not alone of the present aspect."

We wondered if Le Nôtre had this rule in mind when he planned the garden of Maintenon, in relation to the aqueduct constructed

to bring the water for the fountains of Versailles. It is more than two hundred years since he drew the design, but that procession of Titanic ruined arches, draped with jasmine and ivy, is the garden's most beautiful feature, and will so continue so long as its masonry defies the centuries.

From château to château, as we passed in our delightful summer pilgrimage, we carried some new conception of the genius of this master, of his wonderful versatility in adapting his designs to the accidents of the land, or, rather, of inventing new methods of solving the problems presented, and giving each estate its unique character. Sometimes, as at St. Cloud and Meudon, he utilised the hill-slope in a series of magnificent terraces, stepping down most statelily to the river. A larger and more characteristic treatment of a hillside is shown in the great terrace of St. Germain. Here Le Nôtre threw three smaller terraces into one magnificent sweep, forming one of the finest drives in the world. The terrace is 7800 feet long and 97 wide,—a masterpiece of engineering,—and, from one end to the other of its beautiful curve, commands a view of Paris unrivalled for loveliness

Vitet says of these terrace-gardens:

"The secret of taste is to choose in harmony with your building the ornaments which decorate the garden. If your façade is rich and ornate, your salons have grandiose proportions, do not be afraid to use stone and marble out of doors; your edifice *needs* a pedestal in large staircases majestically prolonged. I love a beautiful terrace bordered with a balustrade, along which the sight glides with pleasure as along the festoons of an elegant pattern in lace."

Of all Le Nôtre's gardens not attached to royal châteaux, the one which is most accessible from Paris is Chantilly. It is also a most excellent example of his ideals, as Le Nôtre was practically unfettered in the matter of expense by its magnificent owner, the Grand Condé, and it has been preserved very nearly in its original state. Le Nôtre's statue stands upon the terrace. He holds his plan of the garden and lifts one hand with an inviting gesture, that of a host courteously assuring his guests of their welcome to wander at will in his domain. At Chantilly, as in nearly all of Le Nôtre's designs, the natural wildness of the park is brought into contrast with the formal garden, each enhancing the other. In a retired glade a hamlet was built before that of the Trianon, and it suggested to Marie Antoinette the idea of her own charming retreat. The engravings

of Perelle are surprisingly true to-day. The details of the great terrace staircase are unchanged; the same water-gods sit in their niches and pour rivers from their urns as when Madame de Sévigné wrote enthusiastically on the occasion of the great *fête* of April, 1671, "Of all the places the sun lights upon there is not one equal to it." How much we owe to the vivid letters of this little lady! She is like a flash-light or an instantaneous camera in her revelations of the life of the time.

It was characteristic of the Prince de Condé's audacity to attempt to give a festival to the King and the Court after the example of Fouquet. He had only invited six hundred guests, it is true; but it was necessary to build a new château to lodge them one night, and to provide four meals for them,—a responsibility that crazed Vatel, the famous cook, who committed suicide on this occasion because the fish did not arrive in time. The company dined at fifty-six different tables in the garden. Then followed a stag-hunt in the forest by moonlight,—the ladies in carriages attended by runners with flambeaux.

Sometimes our explorations were more meagrely rewarded. At Sceaux only a small public park remains of the vast estate of six

hundred acres which Colbert purchased in 1650, and where he loved to spend all the time he could spare from the duties of his office; still the little that has survived bears the marks of authenticity. Its terraces, old stone staircases, and great avenues of horse-chestnuts; its open-air ballroom, an occasional toppling vase or broken pillar or carven stone bench are such unmistakable relics of the vast pleasure-grounds which Le Nôtre created, and which Puget and Girardon ornamented, that one feels sincerely grateful to the public-spirited citizens of the commune who purchased the park, on the occasion of its sale, as a promenade for their town. Though Colbert expended vast sums and Le Nôtre made the spot one of his masterpieces, it is more intimately connected in our thoughts with memories of the witty but capricious Duchesse de Maine, granddaughter of the Grand Condé, whose home it became after the death of Colbert. Here she exemplified

“the life which Watteau painted, with its sylvan divinities and its sighing lovers wandering in endless masquerade or whispering tender nothings on banks of soft verdure, amid the rustle of leaves, the sparkle of fountains, the glitter of lights, and the perfume of innumerable flowers. It was a perpetual carnival

inspired by the imagination, animated by genius, and combining everything that could charm the taste, distract the mind, and intoxicate the senses.”¹

The lover of the wild, naturalistic method of gardening will always quarrel with the formal style; but for him who loves to see the architectonic dignity of the château or villa continued in harmonising lines and adjuncts, the art of Le Nôtre will be irresistible. No idea of the charms of these old gardens can be conveyed by this barren enumeration of principles and practice. One must see them to understand them and to love them.

Le Nôtre's life was long, and the amount of work which he accomplished stupendous. It is impossible to compile an exact list of his gardens. He was eighty-six years old when he resigned the offices which he was not willing to hold, now that extreme old age prevented him from performing their duties. The King accepted this resignation only on condition that he would come often to visit him. He consulted him still, making him an arbiter in a dispute between Louvois and himself. On one of these visits the King was about to be wheeled through the garden by one of his

¹ Amelia Mason in *The Women of the French Salons*.

Swiss Guards, and he ordered another wheel-chair and attendant for Le Nôtre, while Mansart, who accompanied them, was allowed to walk. His statue adorns the façade of the Louvre, and his bust stands over the tomb in the chapel which he founded in the church of St. Roch in Paris. Here, too, is the bust of his old fellow-student, Mignard, who has given us so many charming portraits of noble ladies of the period, and who supplanted Charles Le Brun as Court Painter. You would mark Mignard at once as a poet or an artist. Le Nôtre's sculptured face tells nothing of his genius, but, sweeter in expression, speaks the perfect gentleman and a character in accordance with St. Simon's statement: "Le Nôtre had a probity, an exactitude, an uprightness which made him loved by everybody."

One enjoys these gardens none the less when they have gone wild—when dial and balustrade are broken and covered with lichen: such an one we were shown by the Curé of Auteuil, when looking for Boileau's Hermitage, and such you will find connected with many a *presbytère* where it has taken the place of the earlier monkish cloister.

LE JARDIN DE STYLE.¹

Le jardin de la cure est un ancien parterre
 Que depuis bien longtemps, personne n'a bêché,
 Au centre est un bassin, maintenant desseché,
 Où de grands iris bleus poussent en pleine terre.

Les miroirs de gazon, decoupés a l'équerre,
 Y sont bordés d'un buis par endroits arraché,
 Deux pyramides d'ifs, auxquels nul n'a touché,
 Encadrent le perron moussu du presbytère.

Chaque soir, son rosaire à la main, le Curé
 Vient sous une tonnelle au treillis delabré,
 Gouter l'apaisement de la tâche finie—

¹ The Curé's garden is an old parterre,
 That for long years has lain neglected,
 Its fountain basin now is grey and bare,
 And tall blue iris shoot and blossom there,
 In slimy pools reflected.

The sward was silky once and cut by square;
 Its hedge of box is ragged now and yellow;
 The Presbytery's mossy marble stair
 Is shaded by sad yews, unkempt and spare;
 'T is always autumn mellow.

Each eve the Curé, free from worldly care,
 With rosary in hand the garden paces,
 Beneath the trellis bowed with roses fair,
 Pauses to taste deserved contentment rare,
 That toil and pain effaces.

Then if his aged sight, uncertain, dim,
 Succumbs to dreams of youth and memory,

Et s'il fermait les yeux, il entendrait parfois
Sous le vieux boulingrin un murmure de voix,
C'est Le Nôtre qui cause avec La Quintinie.

G. DE VAISSIÈRE.

Low murmuring voices seem to call to him
O'er the old bowling-green so quaint and trim;
It is Le Nôtre who talks with Quintinie.

(Translated by E. F. Champney from the French of M.
Georges de Vaissière.)





CHAPTER V

THE REVENGE OF BUSSY RABUTIN A TALE OF THREE CHÂTEAUX

I

LES ROCHERS AND BUSSY

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ'S charming home of Les Rochers, near the quaint old Breton town of Vitré, is well known to tourists, for its accessibility, the charm of the region, and the wealth of souvenirs of its famous owner gathered here richly repay the visitor. The great estate has not been subdivided, but stretches away to the horizon; and the beautiful garden, which Le Nôtre planned, is worthily maintained. The loving description of the voluble Marquise holds good to-day: "It is so full of jasmines and orange trees that in the evening, when the air is fragrant with their blossoms, one imagines oneself in Provence."



CHÂTEAU OF LES ROCHERS.
From a photograph by J. Wells Champney.

The very orange trees she planted two hundred and fifty years ago are still there. Their twisted trunks rival their contemporaries of Versailles; while the passing generations of mankind, who eat of their fruit and wear their flowers at their bridals, must seem to them only as larger insects. Cedars of Lebanon, still more venerable in appearance, shade the close-cut *boulingrin*, and the air is overpoweringly sweet with the perfume of thousands of roses. The avenues which the Marquise named *L'Honneur de ma Fille*, the Mall, the Cloister, the Solitary Walk, the Endless Walk, still tempt one into the forest; and there is a beautiful view from the terrace wall and a fairy-like echo at a spot which she marked with a white stone, where, if you listen, you can hear the whispers of a friend at a distance buzzing in both your ears as though repeated by invisible sprites. The lower apartment in an extinguisher-topped tower giving upon the garden, which was formerly the library, is fitted with furniture that once belonged to Madame de Sévigné. The chairs were embroidered in cross-stitch by her daughter, and her dressing-table holds her lacquered toilet-set, with her powder- and patch-boxes. A fine full-length portrait by Mignard shows her in Court

costume; and there are also excellent portraits of her father, her husband, her son, and other members of her family. In a glass case are her letters, a book of poetical extracts, her accounts with her gardener, with the queer little inkstand—the well-spring of so much delight to the world.

Fragments of sentences from letters written here come to us as we linger in the charmed spot; the assertion that she always returned to Les Rochers from the satiety of the winter's feasting "hungry for fasting and silence," and that when once established here she wondered that she could live anywhere else. "I mean," she writes her daughter, "to spend all the afternoon in the meadow, conversing with our sheep and cows"; and, again, "I have just passed a couple of hours in the forest with the hamadryads."

And yet the witty Marquise was fitted for other conversation than that of cows and sheep, or the more poetical hamadryads, or even that of her uncle, the good Abbé de Coulanges and his poor parishioners, for whom she built the pretty octagonal chapel which adjoins her château. Never was a woman better equipped to adorn and keenly to enjoy brilliant society. To have been as perfectly con-

tent at Les Rochers as the nightingales she describes, she lacked only family happiness. Her daughter was in Provence, and "the Marquis de Sévigné esteemed, but did not love his wife; while she loved but could not respect him."

She tried bravely to fill the void with other interests. Her love overflowed to her friends, and most indulgently to the Marquise de Monglat,—a bewitching little bride, as saucy, as capricious, and as ignorant of the world as a kitten, whom her serious old husband had recently brought to Court.

Madame de Sévigné was drawn to the little butterfly, and constituted herself her friend and protector. She did more, for she admitted her into her very heart of hearts, carrying her away frequently from that feverish Court atmosphere to her château of Les Rochers, where she found her own physical and mental refreshment, and was able to clear the city smoke from her moral ideals.

Into this Paradise came the serpent, Madame de Sévigné's rascal cousin, Bussy Rabutin, one of the most accomplished, alike of wits and debauchees, of that polished and wicked age.

Bussy describes himself in his most famous book in the following terms: "Roger du

Rabutin, Comte de Bussy, Mestre de Camp de la cavallerie legère,—had large laughing eyes, a well-shaped face, delicate wit, and unfailing gayety. He was gallant with all ladies, for he loved pleasure more than fortune, and honour more than pleasure; but as in his country it is not enough for the achievement of success to have birth, talent, and courage, the sovereign disposer of grace persecuted him, and, embittered by trouble, he found his joy in devising the unhappiness of his enemies.”

The pen-portrait is not a bad one, save for the boast of honour, for of that word Bussy had no conception. At this time the trouble of which he speaks had not come to him, and instead of busying himself directly in effecting the unhappiness of others he sought only his own pleasure with utter unscrupulousness. He made love impartially to his cousin and to her friend, undisturbed in conscience by the confidence of their husbands. The Marquise de Monglat, in her childish ignorance, had no conception of how much more cruel than his hate may be the love of an evil man, but we wonder at the tolerance of the less ignorant woman of the world, who must have known that her cousin was as dangerous as he was fascinating.



MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.



BUSSY RABUTIN.

From steel engravings of the period.

11

Strange as it may seem, it is from this braggart rake himself (who, even in the light of the loose code of honour of the day, disgraced himself as a notorious vaunter of un-received favours) that we have the highest testimony to her character.

In the genealogy of his family he wrote of his cousin: "Marie de Rabutin Chantal, one of the prettiest girls in France, who married Henri de Sévigné, a Breton gentleman,—which was good luck for him!"

Beneath her portrait he placed this inscription:

"Marie de Rabutin, daughter of the Baron de Chantal, Marquise de Sévigné, a woman of extraordinary genius, who knew how to make great attractiveness compatible with the most irreproachable virtue."

It was the only tribute of the kind that he ever gave any woman, and it is recorded side by side with most dastardly vilification of the Marquise de Monglat, who, for aught we know, may have been equally innocent.

Why was it that the Marquise de Sévigné floated in his impure society, like a white lily on the surface of some stagnant pool, not only pure in heart but unsullied in repute? We find the answer written between the lines

of his letters and his chronicles. His love for her had never been very deep. It was partly pride in her as a proof of the genius of their family and partly intellectual enjoyment of her badinage. She had frankly given him his full meed of cousinly affection, and he was fain to accept what she was willing to bestow. With the Marquise de Monglat the case was different. He had loved her too passionately to forgive her when she tricked him at the last, and it was for her that he invented a revenge which not only worked its deadly mischief while she lived, but will blacken, so long as his château stands, the fair fame of the woman who devoted herself to him, for such was the will of the man who had called himself her lover.

Bussy could no more help stinging the hand that caressed him than a nettle, and with all her tact the Marquise de Sévigné was to receive her share of his malevolence; and this in spite of her many kindnesses to him, and the sweet hospitality of Les Rochers with its saunterings among roses and orange blossoms.

The offence which turned his affection for his cousin into bitterness was her refusal to lend him money. War had been declared,

and the king had desired Bussy to take the field with his regiment of light-horse cavalry. By a survival of the old feudal custom it was necessary for the commander to fit out the regiment at his own expense. A sum equivalent to about forty thousand dollars was required, and Bussy could raise only twenty thousand. Unless twenty more could be obtained his opportunity for glory was lost. He applied to his cousin, and Madame de Sévigné tells us that she would cheerfully have lent him the amount required had not her uncle, the Abbé de Coulanges, who cared for her property, objected strenuously, representing that she had no right, in view of the future of her children, to throw such a sum of money from the windows.

Deeply offended, Bussy sought the Marquise de Monglat, who very foolishly sold her jewels and gave him what he needed.

Let us see how Bussy Rabutin rewarded the two women, and, first, in what way he punished Madame de Sévigné. Bussy never forgave an injury, and one of his favourite means of revenging himself on those who had offended him was to circulate malicious slanders couched in terms of caustic humour, though his scandalous chronicle, *L'Histoire*

Amoureuse des Gaules, reads to-day less racily than when passed surreptitiously from hand to hand in manuscript. The book is in part an autobiography; out of his own mouth we will judge him, reading as dispassionately as possible his own version of his relations with his cousin.

"She has small but brilliant eyes, a high forehead, luxuriant blond hair, a beautiful figure, and distinguished bearing, and though not exactly handsome is at least engaging. She sings and dances well. No woman in France has such diverting lively manners; but for a woman of quality she is a trifle too witty. She comprehends too much, and leads you sometimes by her repartee further than you intended. Pleasantry and the enthusiasm of the moment carry her away as well. With so much fire, it is not strange that her judgment is mediocre, for these things are not compatible. She likes all sorts of people, from the royal mantle to the priestly *soutane*; but for her the greatest mark of intellect is admiration of herself. She lives to be praised. Still, to credit her husband, she is cold of temperament.

"She is inconsistent, to the lashes and pupils of her eyes, which are of different colours, and as the eyes are mirrors of the soul, they warn us not to trust her too much, for her friendship may be only double-dealing.

"As I am her near relative, I was very intimate with her, and knew the grief which her husband gave

her (for he boasted of his *liaison* with Ninon de l'Enclos).

“‘So much the worse for you,’ I told him, for my cousin is worth a thousand times as much, and, if she were not your wife, I could wager that you would be in love with her.’

“‘That might very easily be,’ he replied.

“‘I reported this conversation to her, adding: ‘If my lovely cousin wishes to revenge herself I will be half of her vengeance; and will love her all my life.’

“‘My fine Monsieur le Comte,’ she replied, ‘I am not so desirous of that kind of vengeance as you flatter yourself.’

“‘Finding that her happiness depended on being loved by this unworthy man, I wrote her as follows: ‘Since, my dear cousin, jealousy is sometimes more efficacious in bringing back a straying heart than charm and merit. I counsel you to make your husband jealous. I love you enough to sacrifice myself for your happiness, and I offer myself for this purpose.’

“‘The page to whom I gave this letter to take to my cousin found that she was sleeping, and while he waited the Comte de Sévigné arrived, and, recognising my servant, demanded the letter, and having read it, told him to return to me and say that there was no answer. You can well believe that I did not sleep that night. The next morning the Comte waited upon me, and, having reproached me bitterly, forbade me to see his wife. Six months later he was killed in a duel with the Chevalier d’Albret, and his widow seemed inconsolable. Believing that this was only a grimace, I did not wait long to speak to her of

marriage. Though she refused me, I was not discouraged, but remained at her feet. I saw her nearly every day, and wrote her innumerable letters. But she turned my love into pleasantry, though if she had needed all I had in the world it would have made me happy to have given it to her.

"At last I was disillusioned, for when I had need of her assistance, she abandoned me with the most cold-hearted infidelity."

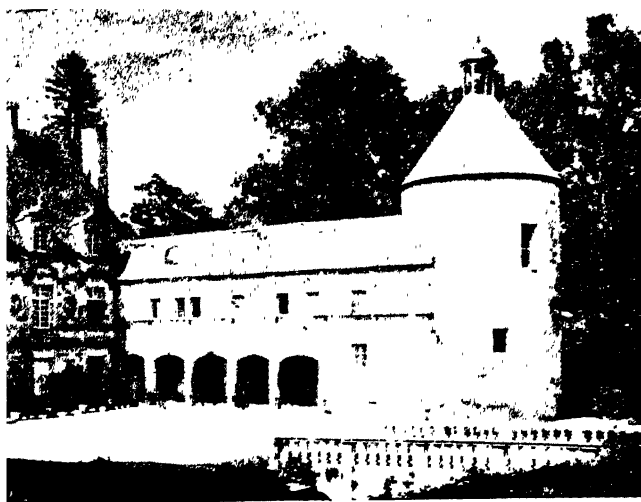
This was Bussy's grievance and his mean revenge.

His cousin's magnanimity is in noble contrast. She wrote him indeed that she had wept tears of vexation over his book; but when she heard that Louis XIV. (scandalised that Bussy had dared to ridicule his *liaison* with Mademoiselle de La Vallière¹) had sent the offender to the Bastile, she promptly forgave him all.

When after six years of imprisonment he fell ill, the King at last listened to her pleas in his behalf, and changed his sentence to ban-

¹ La Vallière's mouth was not of the tiny, crumpled, rosebud kind then in fashion. Her lips were thin but expressive, and before the evil days came her mouth was widened by unconscious smiles. The allusion to this feature in the ribald song that went the rounds was unmistakable:

"Que Deodatus est heureux
De baiser ce bec amoureux,
Qui d'une oreille à l'autre va!
Alleluia!"



TWO VIEWS OF THE CHÂTEAU OF BUSSY-RABUTIN.
From photographs by J. Wells Champney.

ishment to his estates in Burgundy. Thither we must follow him if we would know the sequel to the romance begun in the gardens of Les Rochers and his gratitude for the jewels of Madame de Monglat, which enabled him to cut so fine a figure at the wars.

On one of the sunny slopes of the Côte d'Or, not far from the village of Les Laumes, stands Bussy's enchanting château. It has grown slowly through the ages, and it still preserves four of the original towers with which it started in mediæval times.

Two Italianate galleries tell of reconstruction during the Renaissance, and connect the ancient donjon and chapel with a flourishing main façade in the pompous taste of the Grand Monarque. A forest of magnificent trees environs the château and its garden on two sides; on a third is the grange, with its huge seignorial pigeon tower, while from the terraces the gaze sweeps over the valley to the ranges of the Côte d'Or.

These attractions would alone merit a visit, but the interior of the château offers a series of portrait galleries which make the building unique among all the minor châteaux of France.

One long apartment is hung with French

kings, another with their mistresses, and a third with famous warriors, among whom Bussy does not hesitate to include himself. But by far the most interesting of the portraits are those of Bussy's lady-friends. Banished from the society which was so necessary to his enjoyment, he commissioned the royal portrait painters, Mignard, Coypel, and other famous artists, to paint the leading beauties of the day. The commission is so like that given by Fouquet that the suspicion is forced upon us that some of these paintings may have been in Fouquet's collection, and have been returned to the artists (possibly unpaid for) on the ruin of their princely patron. This would explain Bussy's obtaining many canvases which the fair originals would never have given him.

On the frames of the pictures Bussy made inscriptions in clever verse, satirising his many enemies and eulogising his few friends.

Of Louise de Grenville he writes: "She was beautiful, amiable, and witty, and as capable as any woman in the world of rendering a man happy if she could have loved him,—one of the best friends that ever lived."

But usually even under the dubious com-

pliment there lurks a covert sneer or a lying innuendo—as when he wrote of the lovely Julie d'Angennes: “famous for her beauty, and still more for the use she made of it.”

Not unskilful himself as a painter, he decorated certain rooms of the château with his own hand, with “devices,” allegorical pictures, simulating armorial bearings, caricaturing the foibles of his acquaintances. Frequently he complimented himself in the same way, as when he invented as his own emblem a fountain, with the device “I rise high because my source is elevated,” and a bursting bomb, with the inscription, “*Splendescam da materiam*” (“Give me material and I will create a sensation”). A more homely emblem, an onion, vaunts the appropriate threat, “Who bites me will weep.” In the last two epigrams Bussy spoke the truth, for his satire is like the coruscation of a rocket scattering showers of burning sparks, and any woman who knew him intimately played with fire. Though he distributed his firebrands with liberality, it is the Marquise de Monglat who receives the chief share of this unenviable *éclat*. Evidently he spent years in inventing libellous devices with which to stigmatise her. Now he paints her features joined to the

body of a flying swallow, with the inscription "Fugit hiems" ("She flees stormy weather"). Again she is depicted as a siren who "attracts to ruin." And he caps a long series of insults by placing her in the higher scale of a pair of balances, while the empty one bears the legend, "She is lighter than air."

The entire château is a cup of poison,—the venom is to be found in every room. Sometimes it is only a general pessimism and unfaith in any virtue, as when he writes under a painting of some merit,—*Pygmalion Chiselling the Statue of Galatea*,—"Would you be sure of constancy, love a woman of ivory"; or, again, in the unworthy epigram:

"Éprouver si sa femme a le cœur précieux,
C'est être impertinent autant que curieux,
Un peu d'obscurité vaut en cette matière
Mille fois mieux que la lumière."

The inscription on the tablet under the portrait of his old love tears away the veil of all misunderstanding. It is as cowardly and brutal a stab as was ever struck by a murderer. It reads:

"Cecilia
Isabella Huraut de Cheverny
Marchioness of Monglat,
who by her inconstancy has restored to honour the

Matron of Ephesus and the wives of Astolphus and Jacondus."

Why was this woman so persistently and malignantly vilified? Our chivalric instincts are aroused, and we are tempted, before knowing the facts, to champion the cause of a victim who can make no refutation when so vindictively defamed.

Unfortunately, complete vindication is well-nigh impossible. In our own courts the defendant is held innocent until proven guilty, but French opinion considers a calumniated woman guilty even after she is proved innocent.

So long as Bussy's château stands, the world will know his side of the story. Outside of his blatant denunciation there is but little record of the Marquise de Monglat, but that little is innocent and winsome.

In our wanderings in the Blésois we came upon her birthplace, the stately château of Cheverny, built by her grandfather, the famous Chancellor. It is a more elegant and palatial building than the château of Bussy Rabutin, for more of wealth went to its original building, and it was reconstructed by the father of our Marquise in the style of Louis XIV. at the time that Gaston d'Orléans

brought François Mansart to Blois to build the new wing of his château, and rebuilding was in the air.

Whatever the Comte de Cheverny tore down, the château built in its place remains a "noble, regular, and magnificent habitation," with much of its interior decoration recalling the grace of the former period.

All who have visited this dignified dwelling and have looked upon the still more dignified pictured faces of the men and women from whom Cecilia de Cheverny descended, must feel that there is another side to the story. Such lovers of justice would surely be glad to know that in Vauban's old home of Bazoches (which by the strange ways of fate has come into the Cheverny family) there had been discovered an unsigned letter, written presumably by Madame de Vauban, the devoted friend of the Marquise de Monglat, which gives her *rôle* in the pitiful drama. The letter was never sent, for its writer, evidently fearing the mischief that might arise from a discussion of its disclosures, had endorsed it with this superscription:

"It were better that this letter should not be opened until this seventeenth century and

we who live therein shall have long passed away."

It speaks well for the respect or lack of curiosity of those who may have handled the effects of the Countess that the letter was found in our own day with its heavy seals unbroken.

II

THE DIAMONDS OF CHEVERNY

"YOUR letter, my dear Sebastien, telling me of the great honour awarded you by the King in presenting you with the letters patent which raises your title to that of Count, and enclosing the same in so exquisite a casket, the work of the ebeniste Boule, was duly brought to Bazoches, and has filled me with joy and pride, assuring me as it does of his Majesty's appreciation of your frontier fortifications, and especially of the great fortress of Besançon. But as I read further of your visit at the château of Bussy Rabutin, the recital of what you heard and saw in that habitation so stirred my mind that my words must needs fall pell-mell on one another while I tell what I know of this matter,

which, as you surmise, is indeed no small part.

“And first let me thank you for your generous attitude toward my poor friend, in that you say that a woman who has made the most terrible of all mistakes should be forgiven once, since God forgives the penitent, and we know not how bitter her remorse may be.

“Yet when you add, that rather than credit such error of the Marquise de Monglat, you would fain think the Comte de Bussy a liar and a braggart of unreceived favours, and call upon me, from what I know of her character, to assure you that she could never have written the letter which he showed you,—I have indeed a hard task to perform. For well do I remember that she showed me this very letter, in which she declared that she counted the world well lost for a life in retirement with the man whom she really loved.

“I remember, too, how in agony of soul I besought her not to send this letter to the Count, and that she not only did so, but also carried out the intention therein expressed, giving up all that many hold dear, and secluding herself in a country château with her lover. I know, moreover, that she has

not repented, nor to her dying day will she ever repent that action. Is that a black page in my friend's history? Wait, I beseech you, until you have read all my testimony, and then judge her as you will.

"Let me say in the beginning, in her extenuation, that a major part of the blame which attaches itself to the Marquise de Monglat must rest with the Cheverny diamonds, for could they have been devised, as the old chancellor wished, to a son of the house, and the château entailed upon the daughters, with the condition of continual residence, then all this trouble might have been spared his descendants. The Chancellor was right when he said: 'I have observed that our practice of devising our lands to the eldest son and providing our daughters with dowries of jewels often works mischief. For the young man is held a prisoner in the paternal acres by the necessity of maintaining the estate at the very time when his ambition and his budding powers lead him to a career in the great world; and the girl is tempted by the magnificence of her *parure* to flaunt her diamonds in the eye of the Court. Whereas the chief usefulness of gems of price lies in their availability as pledges for ready money

which may give scope and opportunity for manly enterprises; and a landed estate is a great development for the faculties and philanthropies of a noble woman, as well as a fortress against the wiles of the Evil One.'

"If the Chancellor had left a son and a daughter he might have circumvented the laws of succession by giving the Cheverny jewels to the boy and the château to the girl. But of a numerous family fate so ordered it that only the late Comte de Cheverny should survive him, and he, after having enjoyed both legacies, handed them down undiminished to his daughter, the Marquise de Monglat. She loved them both: the old château in which she was brought up, and which later in life came to be what her grandfather had wished it, and the ancestral diamonds which at first exercised upon her the malevolent influence which he dreaded. The diamonds were superb: a coronet, a necklace with pendants, and smaller pieces. When, upon her twelfth birthday, the Comte opened the morocco cases and showed the child the gems, she decked herself with them with such immoderate delight that the Chancellor's warning occurred to him, and he strove to impress his daughter with her grandfather's views.

‘They be magic stones,’ he said, ‘of great value. You see in them the reward of heroic deeds and the price of long toil. They are beautiful and costly, but their chief end is not to make you a shining mark for some fortune hunter, and to turn your silly head. They are yours to bestow upon some good man who shall love you truly, to be used by him to advance his career as securities for temporary loans when in need of money, and to be handed down to your son for the same purpose. It is as though they were the seeds of some wonderful century-plant, blooming in succeeding generations into flowers of glory for our family.’

“The girl could not fully understand him then, but she remembered afterward. What she comprehended quite clearly at the time was that they were to be a part of her dowry, to be given her on her wedding day, and she longed for the day to come. When she was fifteen her father brought to the château the man he had chosen, François de Paule de Clermont, Marquis de Monglat, one of his friends, of nearly his own age, so grave and learned that he was called at Court ‘Monglat le Bibliothèque’; but a man who had been Mestre de Camp of the regiment of Navarre,

and had acted a valorous part in his youth; a big man, with a voice used to shouting commands down the line, and eyes that looked every man through and through and took his measure, but faltered and fell abashed before the glance of a woman.

“Cecilia confided to me that she regarded him with disappointment (for she was romantic and had dreamed of a handsome prince); but what she most eagerly desired was the *entrée* into life, and it needed but a short acquaintance to tell her that she had found her empire, that henceforth there was nothing which she might wish in all the world which he would not strive to make her own. She told me that on her wedding morning her father placed the jewel-boxes in her arms, saying as he did so, ‘Give them to your husband, and bid him make them the ladder to honour.’

“But she hugged them tight, and besought him: ‘You will not sell or dispose of them, will you? I want to wear them always, and to feel that they are my very own.’

“‘I should despise myself if I accepted distinctions purchased by my wife’s fortune,’ the Marquis replied. ‘I will never ask you for them; they are absolutely and entirely yours.’

“So the Marquis had himself to blame if his wife acted on that inconsiderate promise later on. He was a well-meaning man, but undoubtedly not quick at comprehending all the routes to which an open gate may lead. Some people even called him dense. It was Bussy Rabutin who started that opinion. But for Bussy’s penetration his dulness might never have been discovered, for he had, as you know, served with credit on the King’s side throughout the Fronde, and after the cessation of hostilities had received as a mark of his sovereign’s favour the post of Master of the King’s Wardrobe. This furnished Bussy with reason for his ridicule, for the Marquis de Monglat was better fitted to be the King’s councillor in matters of State than in fashion. He accepted the position because it enabled him to take his wife to Court, but I have seen him at his wit’s end endeavouring to design costumes which would please his Majesty, and settling with the shopkeepers the important question of how many rows of ribbons should furbish a *justaucorps*, and what sort of lace should be the mode for the King’s ruffles.

“The Marquise might have aided him here, but he made the mistake from the outset of

not admitting her into the sharing of his perplexities, and as they now filled the greater part of his days and his nights, there was little time left for them to enjoy together.

"He insisted, however, that the Marquise should enjoy to the full the social privileges to purchase which he had sold himself to uncongenial drudgery.

"What filled Bussy with the most sublime contempt for the Marquis de Monglat was this doting confidence in his young wife, his delight at all her triumphs, and the insult to his own reputation as a lady-killer in allowing her to frequent his society.

"The intimacy was not of the Marquis's choosing, but came about through the Comte de Cheverny's friendship for the Marquise de Sévigné. 'Make her your model,' he had said to his daughter, 'for she is able to walk safely amid the pitfalls of Court life. I could wish for you no better companion.'

"They became inseparable, often making little journeys together. It was at Saint Fargeau, where we were all visiting the Grande Mademoiselle, that my friendship with the Marquise de Monglat began. Mademoiselle de Montpensier gave a festival in honour of her guests, to which Bussy responded with

one at his own château. He had not then decorated it with the portraits of his friends, but we were there in person. Of course, the *fête* was supposed to be in honour of Mademoiselle de Montpensier, conjointly with the celebration of his cousin's visit to Burgundy, though we could all see that Bussy had eyes alone for the pretty Marquise de Monglat. He has in his park a statue of *Proserpina Snatched away by Pluto*. I came upon them suddenly as Bussy was showing it to his guest. He was saying, 'I can understand how Pluto was content with Hades if Proserpina resembled you, Marquise.'

"She turned grave. 'But I cannot understand,' she replied, 'how Proserpina could leave this good world, even though Pluto resembled you, Monsieur le Comte.'"

"From Bussy's château Madame de Sévigné carried us to her own in Brittany, and thither her cousin followed us, for he was bewitched by the girl. And so Bussy became associated in my friend's mind with country life, walks in woods and talks in gardens, and poetry read aloud while the needle glanced above the tambour frame.

"Your duties as Director-General of Fortifications keeping you still from home, I was

glad to accept the invitation of the Marquise de Monglat, which came to me a little later, to spend a winter with her at Versailles, and the friendship of the summer continued. The Marquis de Monglat was well satisfied, for he had feared that his girl-wife might weary in his sober society. The Marquise de Sévigné was a ray of sunshine, and in her company Madame de Monglat could enjoy all the balls and festivals so suitable to her age, while Monsieur could spend his evenings in regulating his accounts or in interviews with wig-makers and embroiderers.

“Bussy was always in attendance, a most convenient escort and an entertaining companion. He was a past-master in compliment, and I have heard him tell the Marquise that she was like his cousin’s orange flowers, for she made the air sweeter by breathing it! He was also an adept at turning graceful *vers de société*, a witty *raconteur*, an accomplished dancer, rider, and fencer; handsome, extravagant in dress and in all the *tenue* of a grand seigneur, and he was ‘the fashion,’ his company eagerly sought by the greatest ladies of the Court. What wonder that the foolish little butterfly was flattered that he neglected them to pay assiduous court to her?

"Soon his devotion was remarked by all except the Marquis, and Bussy chuckled unworthily and made the husband's overconfidence the subject of many a jest, demanding of his friends whether any man of spirit could consider it other than a challenge for him to do his worst.

"At first the Marquise de Monglat was intoxicated by Court life, and the Cheverny diamonds shone at every function. The regular amusement at the King's triweekly receptions, as you know, is gaming, and though his Majesty's presence had the effect of regulating the pastime, restraining the losers from swearing profanely, and ending the play early, still many lost sums which they could ill afford, and the Marquise de Monglat was invariably unlucky. She promised her husband to play no more, but was led to break her resolution, and found herself at the end of the evening a loser to the extent of two thousand livres. Bussy, who lounged at the back of her chair, noticed her look of dismay, and, recognising his opportunity, promptly paid the debt, remarking carelessly that he would act as her banker, and she might reimburse him at her convenience.

"I was a witness to the loan, and afterward

when she very honestly gave him a written receipt over her own name for the amount, thus unconsciously placing herself in his power.

"I begged her instead to confess her fault to her husband, but she could not bring herself to do this. 'My dear,' she said, 'my husband loves me too much to forgive me, or rather he loves a perfect woman of his own imagination, and when he discovers that I am not faultless he will simply understand that he has never loved *me* at all.'

"We must give Bussy all the credit and discredit which is his due, and absolve him at that time from any intention to wring money from her. He never paid his own debts or troubled himself greatly about moneys due him. It was payment of another kind which he had planned to exact. But very shortly after this there came to him the obligation to lead his regiment to the wars. The next evening at Versailles the Marquise de Monglat noted that he was unhappy, and as they walked upon the terrace, some evil genius inspiring Bussy, he told her of the King's order, which could not be obeyed, for his love for her made it beyond his power to leave her.

"Shocked, bewildered, wondering if she

were to blame for this, remembering that the Marquise de Sévigné was praised for converting lovers into friends, and too inexperienced in the methods of her friend to perform this miracle by raillery, she committed the mistake of taking Bussy seriously. She reasoned with him, pleaded, commanded, and promised to forgive him if he would forget this madness and think only of his honour.

"Bussy acted contrition, and promised to go—but stayed.

"He haunted the Marquise, gazing at her silently and acting the heartbroken lover to outdo even Molière. At her first opportunity the Marquise reproached him for not joining his regiment, and he confessed his need of money, which he did not regret since it gave him a reason for remaining near her.

"In a panic, her one thought to force him at any cost to leave her, the Marquise pawned her jewels and furnished Bussy with the sum he needed.

"You will ask me why I, her friend and confidante, did not save her from this act of folly. I answer that I never suspected her capable of it until too late.

"I reproached her with her imprudence, and it was then that she told me of her

grandfather's eccentric notions. 'He never wished the diamonds to belong to a woman of our house,' she said. 'Either we are all jewel-mad or they are no ordinary stones. I hope Bussy will be better for them, as I know I shall be better without their influence. As long as they rested in my casket they called me to Court, and I obeyed.'

"I am a different woman when I wear them,—vain, coquettish, greedy for admiration; they burn into my soul and scorch my better impulses. They are mine to do with as I will. My grandfather counselled only that they should be bestowed upon some man who would love me enough to make them the gage of heroic deeds. I think they have found their destiny, for Bussy has promised to tear this passion from his heart and live henceforth for nobler aims.'

"I knew that she had spoken truly in regard to the evil influence of the diamonds. On the evening that Bussy declared himself she had not intended to go with him to Versailles, for I had sprained my ankle, and she insisted on staying with me. But when her escort called for us, her husband brought her the casket and himself fastened the necklace about her throat, bidding her go and outshine

all the other belles; and as the tiny clasp clicked, the colour mounted to her cheeks, and her good resolutions were stifled.

“Bussy accepted the sacrifice, promising to find means for restoring the diamonds on his return from the Low Countries, and rode away jauntily to the war. Perhaps his absence had not been too dearly purchased, for the infatuation of the Marquise de Monglat was cured. She attended the Court functions no more, but devoted herself to her home and to her husband.

“But his manner toward her had changed. No longer the doting lover, he was cold and silent, and looked at her strangely when she essayed the coquettish graces with which he had once been enchanted. He never reproached her, or showed by look or gesture that he suspected anything of what had happened; but through his perfunctory kindness and courtesy she could but feel an immense difference: the love which he had once lavished upon her seemed dead. As we care more for what we have once undervalued after it is lost, so the Marquise set herself the task of winning back his affection by every means in her power—save that of full confession. At times there seemed to be a gleam of the old

fondness in his glance; then it changed suddenly to scrutiny, like that of a naturalist studying dispassionately the habits of some little wild animal. Once a swift wonder shot into her mind: 'Did he know?' He had never alluded to her jewels, or expressed surprise that she did not wear them. She dismissed the idea at once. He was not clever enough to guess her secret, or, knowing it, to feign ignorance. Why had he changed? She felt herself innocent and injured. Why did he no longer love her?

"Then suddenly Bussy came home from the wars. She received a note from him. He had thought of her every moment of his absence, but had not written for fear that his letters might fall into the hands of 'the *Bibliothèque*.' But he had a surprise for her, a proof that she had been constantly in his mind, that he had laboured for her during every spare moment of the campaign. Where might he come and lay his offering at her feet?

"The Marquise became cold and hot. She dreaded to see him, and yet she must. Perhaps he had redeemed her jewels, and was bringing them back to her, and she gave Bussy an appointment when her husband would be in Paris with the King's tailor.

“What was her disappointment to find that Bussy’s surprise was indeed a genuine one, for it had nothing to do with what he was pleased to term the paltry money transaction. In gratitude for that trifling favour, he had written for her amusement, so he assured her, an immortal work of genius, a chronicle of Court *amours*, under the title of *L’Histoire Amoureuse des Gaules*, a collection of scandalous anecdotes, which did not even spare royalty. He had read parts of it in camp to his brother officers, and it had been praised as the most racy production of the age. It was too reckless an act, perhaps, and one which would bring heavy punishment if known, but he trusted her completely, and would leave this choice piece of literature with her for her delectation.

“In her solitary moments she perused Bussy’s manuscript. Far from being charmed with the felicities of its style, she was shocked by its audacity, and especially that her friend, the Marquise de Sévigné, should have been included among its heroines. Her indignation rose as she read the satirical description of the woman who had treated Bussy with such undeserved kindness, and, regardless of the consequences, she tore

Bussy's transcendent work into bits, and threw it into the fire.

"Telling him when next she met him what she had done, and what she thought of his performance, Bussy had need of his utmost self-control not to betray the anger which he felt. But he was not through with the Marchioness, and he admitted that he had been inconsiderate, and that, since the book offended her delicacy of feeling, he was glad she had destroyed it. After all, what was fame to love? He was sorry to learn that 'the old *Bibliothèque*' was not treating her well, and he begged the privilege of consoling her.

"Bussy had overreached himself. The shameless book enlightened the Marquise as to his true character, and she broke with him utterly.

"All the world knows what reward Bussy received for writing that book, for, while assuring my friend that there was no other copy of his chronicles in existence, the perfidious author had no mind to sacrifice the *éclat* which he foresaw that his masterpiece would create; and, carefully rewriting it, he circulated the manuscript among his friends. Finally printed in Amsterdam, it came to the knowledge of the King, and Bussy regretted

that he had ever aspired to literary honours. The Marquis de Monglat brought his wife the news.

"Startled by the suddenness of the announcement, she repeated his words: 'Bussy Rabutin in the Bastile! Thank God! Never a man deserved it more!'

"The Marquis's face underwent a transformation, and he extended his arms to his wife. 'If those are your true sentiments, Cecilia, we can be happy yet.'

"There was no explanation of what was in the mind of each. The Marquis de Monglat could not tell his wife that he had doubted, not her loyalty but her love. It was enough that the infatuation was ended and that Bussy Rabutin would never more come into their lives. For six years they were happy. Two children were born to them, a boy and a girl. The Marquise retired with them to Cheverny, her husband joining her as often as his office at Court would permit.

"Here I visited them, and can bear witness to their felicity. Only, and even then it seemed to me a mistake, the Marquise confided to me that she could not tell her husband how she had pawned her jewels for Bussy.

“‘There are some things which cannot be explained,’ she said; ‘the facts themselves are lies. I am glad that the diamonds are gone, glad that my daughter will never feel their evil magnetism, and that this dear château will keep us both true.’

“The childhood of the Marquise had been passed here, and the stately salons were dear to her from association. She showed me the great Salle des Gardes with its raftered ceiling picked out with gold and vermillion, and told how as a little girl she peered under the helmets of empty suits of armour, striving to recognise Don Quixote, whose exploits decorated a long corridor.

“There was something Quixotic in her father’s character; a love for chivalric ideas, —now nearly passed from France,—such as honour and *devoir*, courtesy to ladies, purity of life, and the sentiment of *noblesse oblige*,—so deeply rooted that he firmly believed that gentle birth and gentle hearts were synonymous. He had shown her the magnificent *lit de parade* in the chamber in which the great chancellor had died, and then, taking her to the little chapel, had read the pathetic epitaph composed for himself by the old man, showing the emptiness of all earthly grandeur.



CHÂTEAU OF CHEVERNY, SALLE DES GARDES.

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She had understood very little of it at the time, but the impression had remained deeply graven upon her mind that she came from a family '*sans tache*,' and that she must so preserve its escutcheon.¹

"She was glad to have her children brought up in the same atmosphere, to play on the close-clipped lawns that stretched in front of the gracious château, and to spell out the quaint devices on the floral panels in the drawing-room. For her father, the Comte de Cheverny, had had the mania of the day of making his home an illuminated missal of picture and proverb. These original inscriptions told the humour of the man, not caustic and cynical like Bussy's, but noble and kindly in their sentiment, making each flower an admonition or a symbol of some sweet thought.

¹"The portrait of the Chancellor at the Château of Cheverny shows a face full of character, integrity, and power—a face to trust.

"Qui florissait en biens souhaite imprudemment
Le malheureux bonheur de vivre longuement
Car, regnant en ce monde une inconstance extrême
Souvent vivre longtemps c'est survivre à soi même.
Despouilli des plaisirs qui ravis par le sort,
Font q'une longue vie est une longue mort

Mais quoi. Si vivre en peine est un mal nécessaire
Ce qui plaît au Seigneur ne nous doit point déplaire."

"Philippe Hurault Comte de Cheverny a faict mettre cette epitaphe ce moys de Mars 1595."

"The Marquis de Monglat was almost as fond of the château as his wife. He longed for country life, for he hated the petty duties of his office, and he had an intense desire to write a history of the Fronde. At times he had striven to work upon it at Versailles, but always to be interrupted and distracted by consideration of points and garters, the cut of a baldric, or the correct shape of rosettes for slippers. At Cheverny he could write, but he was allowed to absent himself from Court but a few days at a time, and his Majesty found fault with even these visits. His post was a lucrative one, and the Marquis displayed an eagerness to amass money which had hitherto seemed foreign to his nature, and he finally ceased his visits to Cheverny.

"The Marquise felt now a great aversion to Court life, which was heightened by their decision to leave their children at Cheverny, but she knew her place to be at her husband's side, and she affected to be delighted to return to Versailles with him.

"It chanced that I was at Paris, and, hearing of the return of the Marquis and Marquise de Monglat, I hastened to welcome them, and found their salon filled with friends bent on a similar errand. But very soon we noticed a

change in the Marquise. She was no longer the leader of the gay butterfly set, and her old companions continually urged her to frequent the receptions of which she had once been so fond.

"Madame de Fiesque, no true friend and a malicious gossip, reproached her for keeping so much at home. 'There was a time,' she said, 'when the Cheverny diamonds lighted up every assembly of rank and fashion; now you are never seen at Court. I hardly see why you have left your dear Cheverny if you seclude yourself in this way.'

"'My wife's tastes have changed,' the Marquis replied, 'since she has become a mother. I, too, feel the necessity of more economy in order to provide for the future of our children.'

"'Oh! as for that,' Madame de Fiesque replied, with a toss of her head, 'the boy will have the château and estates of Cheverny, and the Cheverny diamonds will be dowry enough for the girl. For my part, I do not believe in denying oneself too much for one's children. By the way, none of your jewels have been stolen, I trust?'

"Why was it that woman persisted in harping on her diamonds? The face of the

Marquise flamed, but she answered bravely that she had not been robbed.

“‘So glad to hear it, for Mademoiselle de Montpensier is telling every one that a Jew tried to sell her a coronet which she is sure you used to wear. It was just at the outbreak of the last war, and people are wondering whether you sold it.’

“‘The Marquise could not reply, but her husband answered for her. ‘Tell the Grande Mademoiselle that she is mistaken, for my wife has all of her jewels.’

“‘That is well,’ said Madame de Fiesque, ‘do induce her to wear them, for there are so many absurd rumors in the air. They even say, my dear Marquis, that you have forbidden your wife to attend the literary *coterie* which pays its court to the Marquise de Sévigné at her new town house, the Hôtel Carnavalet.’

“‘The Marquise is the friend we most esteem. What could have given rise to so ridiculous an idea?’

“‘Is it possible that you have not heard that when her scapegrace cousin fell ill from his six years’ confinement in the Bastille, the King changed his sentence to banishment to his estates, to take effect so soon as he is able

to travel, and that he is now being tenderly nursed by the forgiving Marquise de Sévigné, at the Hôtel Carnavalet? He is a sad dog, and many a man will not allow his wife to speak to him.'

"A silence fell upon us all, broken by the Marquis de Monglat: 'I shall call upon the Comte de Bussy and congratulate him upon his release,' he said, stiffly; and, having bowed out the unpleasant old lady, he added to his wife 'You must go more into society, Cecilia, and you must wear your diamonds.'

"She tried to summon courage to tell him all the miserable truth, but the words would not come.

"'I hate the diamonds,' she stammered. 'I never mean to wear them again. I wish with all my heart that they really had been stolen, then perhaps——'

"She faltered, her confession dying upon her lips. The Marquis studied her face with dissatisfaction, and another opportunity for complete confidence was lost.

"'You forget your children,' he said coldly; 'they should be handed down to them, or to our son if you prefer. They may stand him in good stead at some crisis in his career, as your grandfather so sagaciously pointed out.'

"Not till then had she fully realised that the diamonds had never been absolutely her own. Her boy did not exist when she surrendered the gems for Bussy, but she knew that this did not absolve her from responsibility. As a wife she should have considered the future of possible children. Only the use of the diamonds was actually hers. They were as truly entailed as the château, a sacred trust to be handed down to the race of Cheverny.

"‘You are right,’ she said to her husband, ‘we must be seen more at social functions, or mischief-makers like this insolent old woman will invent reasons for our absence. I will begin by attending the receptions of Madame de Sévigné, and I will wear the diamonds at the next of the royal *appartements*.’

"It was plain to them both that the truth was being shouted at last from the housetops, and that every one was saying not alone that the Marquise de Monglat had sacrificed her fortune for Bussy Rabutin, but that the fact could admit of but one interpretation. The only way to refute the story was to wear the diamonds; the only way to obtain them seemed to her to demand their restitution from Bussy.

"She met him first at the salon of his cousin. There were many curious eyes besides my own which noted that his gaze devoured her face with increased admiration, for she had grown more beautiful, a placid, matronly dignity taking the place of the vivacity of her girlhood.

"She drew my arm within her own and led me away from the company down a long corridor and into the little boudoir of our hostess. Bussy followed, as she doubtless meant that he should.

"‘My dear Countess of Vauban,’ he said to me, ‘make me your debtor all my life by standing guardian on the other side of that door for a moment. I have something of importance to say to the Marquise.’

"Her hand clutched my arm imperiously. ‘The Countess is my confidante,’ she said coldly, ‘and whatever you have to tell me can be told in her company.’

"‘Hardly,’ he replied, with a forced laugh. ‘You were not always so disdainful. Once you did me a great kindness when my own blood deserted me.’

"‘I am glad you remember it,’ she said, significantly. ‘Restore my jewels and I will believe in your friendship. And now open

the door, Monsieur le Comte, for I hear some one coming.'

"Ah! you are a true woman, mercenary to your finger-tips. No matter, you shall have your diamonds though I mortgage my estates. I will send them to you to-morrow at four.'

"I was with her at her request when his messenger arrived. The man brought only a letter from Bussy, telling her that he had ascertained that the Jew had sold the gems, the date of their redemption having passed. He made no offer to pay his debt in money, but urged her to leave her husband, and, joining her lover in his exile, to accept triumphantly the position with which all the world accredited her, and which he had never denied.

"The hands of the Marquise clenched in anger, but they relaxed with surprise as she read on:

"I am positive that your husband knows all. He promised my cousin that you should wear the Cheverny diamonds at the King's next reception to give the lie to certain rumours concerning their having been sold! You can judge whether it will be easy to content him when you are obliged to explain what you have done with them. Would it not be as well to be out of harm's way?"

“A burning blush crimsoned the face of the Marquise as her fingers flew over the paper, replying to Bussy’s disgraceful proposal. She had good cause for shame, for her letter gave Bussy the assurance for which he had not actually hoped. With all his egotism he could hardly credit his eyes when he read that she had at last decided to give up for ever the dazzling Court, to count the world well lost for the sake of a secluded life with the man of her choice, of whose literary genius she was proud, and whose love (though sadly tried) she was rejoiced to find was as unalterable as her own. She handed me this letter to read, and seemed much amused by my distress, watching me all the time with her head perched saucily on one side.

“‘I do not understand you,’ I cried indignantly. ‘If this is a practical joke, the time and matter are ill chosen.’

“‘You speak truly, Madame,’ she replied, gaily, ‘you do not understand me; let us see whether my husband in all these years has learned to know me any better.’

He opened the door as she spoke, but, seeing that I was with her, was about to retire, when his wife called him, and he sank wearily upon a sofa at her side, avoiding meeting her eyes.

She gave him a quick, slant glance of comprehension.

“‘François,’ she said, ‘I am going to scold you.’

“‘Would it not be better to wait until we are alone, Cecilia?’

“‘No, Monsieur, for this good friend knows all I have to say. Why did you pretend to Madame de Fiesque the other day that you did not know that I had pawned my diamonds?’

“‘Surely it was for me to be ignorant of such a fact (if fact it is) until I learned it from you.’

“‘Admirably answered, but you are not ignorant, Monsieur. How long is it that you have known of that piece of folly?’

“‘Since the day that you did it, Cecilia, and I have been waiting all this time for you to tell me why you did so.’

“‘You have known it all this time!’ she said, the wonder making her voice tremble. ‘You have known it and yet have loved me?’

“‘Yes,’ he answered sadly, ‘for (though it troubled me at first) we have been so happy that until to-day I have trusted that some day it would all be explained, and that you were true to me.’

“‘And if you have believed this after such a

test as that, then why not now? Ah, I see! you have read this letter which has just come to me from Bussy Rabutin. I might have seen that it had been opened. Oh, for shame, François!’

“‘No, for honour,’ he replied sternly, ‘or it might have been so had I read them before; but “the old *Bibliothèque*” is not so stupid as you have thought.’

“‘Oh, yes, he is!’ the Marquise cried, facing him, ‘more stupid, a thousand times more so, than I could conceive. Could you, who knew all along my weakness for cards (a passion conquered now, thank Heaven!) believe that I could lend that man money except in return for money obligations, or speak to him, now that I know his true character, save in the hope of recovering that loan and rescuing from his hands our children’s fortune? since you have doubted me, read my answer, and know me truly at last, François.’

“‘Are you mad?’ I cried, striving vainly to snatch the letter from her hands. ‘Have you forgotten what you have written?’ But I was not quick enough, and the Marquis had devoured its contents.

“‘You will not send this letter, now that we understand one another?’ he said slowly.

“‘Nay, François, I will send it, for I meant every word,’ she replied passionately. ‘I want that wretch to understand that it is you, and you alone whom I love, and have loved always. Can you not see that it is our own château of Cheverny which I have chosen as my refuge, that I refer to in this letter? Will you not believe me and flee with me for ever from this wicked Court? Sell your office to whoever desires such slavery. You who have a soul above buttons shall devote yourself to your great history, and I will give myself to our children and to you,—and what more is there for us to live for?’

“You can guess the Marquis’s answer, for you know how Bussy waited in vain at his château in the Côte d’Or,—for they drove away presently to Cheverny, as happy as, nay happier than, when they first came to Paris upon their wedding tour, for at last there was perfect truth and confidence between them.

“But before they left they made their adieux to the Court and to the King at one of his ‘grand *appartements*,’ and the Marquise wore the Cheverny diamonds, to the stupefaction of the gossips, for it was her husband who had long ago purchased them of the Jew!

“This, Sebastien, was the affront which the

Comte de Bussy has spent his exile in revenging. Neither the Marquis nor the Marquise in their happy retirement knew that he had given tongues to the walls of his château to calumniate the Marquise de Monglat to every visitor.

“Those who know Bussy Rabutin well will feel that his very venom proclaims her innocence, while in the last edition of his book (which is still secretly circulated in spite of the King’s ban), you will find the reason of his anger frankly acknowledged: ¹

“Had she chosen from one of her gallants
I ne’er would have lifted my voice,
But in spite of my recognised talents
Her *husband* ’s the man of her choice!”

¹ “Je penserois n’estre pas malheureux
Si la beauté dont je suis amoureux
Pouvoit en fin se tenir satisfaite
De mille amans avec un favory?
Mais j’enrage que la coquette
Aime encor, jusqu’à son mary!”

—From *L’Histoire Amoureuse des Gaules*
by BUSSY RABUTIN.





CHAPTER VI

A MODEL OF NATTIER'S

(PICTOR LOQUITUR)

“YOU have asked me, my friend, to name the most beautiful woman in all France, and I do not find your question a difficult one.

“Few will question my ability to judge, for I have had rare privileges, as Court painter during the reign of his Majesty Louis XV. Never monarch existed who was so eager to attract beauty to his Court, and at no reign has there developed in our country so exquisite a type of womanly loveliness. Let him who would gainsay this compare the exuberant beauties of the reign of the Grand Monarque, as pictured for us by my predecessor, Mignard, with the miracles of elegance who, as they sit to me for their portraits, cause at once my ecstasy and despair. He will

Henriette de Bourbon Conti, Duchesse
d'Orléans

From a painting by Jean Marc Nattier in the Musée of Versailles

(By permission of Neaume Frères, Paris)



comprehend that when I name the Princesse Henriette de Bourbon-Conti as the most perfect creature I have seen, I proclaim her also the most beautiful woman that France has ever known.

"Her rank, her wealth, and her graces of heart and mind matched her person, and yet, so mischievous is the little god Cupid, that the Duke of Chartres flatly refused to obey his sovereign when commanded to marry this paragon of all attractions.

"It was my little model who caused this mischance, for if the minx had not thrust her pretty head from behind a screen in my studio at just the wrong moment the Duke might have submitted obediently to his august master, and have offered himself to the Princess, and so have been shortly married, with no perturbations of raptures and despairs.

"How a marriage based upon a lie would have prospered is another matter, for the Princess had a passionate as well as a proud nature, and one might well pity her husband on the day when she discovered that she had been tricked into wedding a man who was indifferent to her solely in order that the feud between the rival houses of Orléans and

Bourbon might be ended, their ambitions satisfied, and the balance of politics adjusted.

“Possibly, therefore, it was just as well that the little plot so ingeniously woven by the King’s daughter (and never was stratagem more innocently or kindly conceived) utterly failed of its accomplishment.

“And, first, of this angelic Princess. Of all the daughters of Louis XV.—and I have painted them all many times, and in their sittings have come to know them intimately—none approached Madame Henriette in beauty of character. She seemed, indeed, to combine the best traits of all her sisters: the intelligence and will-power of Madame Adelaide softened by the gentleness of Madame Sophie, the devotion of Madame Louise, the affection of Madame Elizabeth, and the good-humour and generosity of Madame Victoire.

“I painted her as Flora before a blight touched her heart and gave her face the pathetic beauty of later years. It was at this time that the Duke of Chartres (who has now inherited his late father’s title of Duke of Orléans) loved her and asked her hand in marriage.

“But there were weighty reasons why Louis XV. could not consent. The Condés

and their cousins, the Contis, were jealous of every favour received by the House of Orléans. They were an envious, grasping horde, ready at any moment to take offence and to turn their power against the throne. The King saw his way to end their incessant jealousies in a union of interests by a marriage between their house and that of Orléans.

"Therefore, as though his refusal were not enough, Louis added insult to injury by intimating to the Duke of Chartres that he might console himself by wedding the beautiful daughter of Armand de Bourbon-Conti.

"This was too much for any man of sensibility and spirit to bear; and, finding him so recalcitrant, I know not to what lengths Louis might have proceeded but for the intercession of his daughter. Madame Henriette's tears touched his heart, and, as she promised to persuade her lover to obey the hard command, Louis agreed not to push the matter until a year from that date.

"A year to Louis XV. seemed ample time for the strongest passion to cool and for any broken heart to mend. But, as the sequel showed, Madame Henriette had promised more than she could bring about. The Duke of Chartres remained obdurate. 'If we can-

not be wedded, then I will marry no woman,' he swore, 'for I have given you my heart.'

"She looked at him sadly. 'But if I should die?' she asked.

" 'Then I shall die, too,' he answered.

"In vain she tried to move him by showing him his danger—the end of all ambition, the Bastille,—perhaps death.

" 'I will go where your father's power cannot reach me. I do not give you up. I will wait in exile for some favourable turn of fortune, and if it never comes I shall still wait.'

"He kept his word, and fled to England. The King laid no hand upon his estates. 'It is only a little journey,' he said to the Prince de Conti. 'He will be back in a year's time to ask for the hand of your daughter; it has been so agreed between us.'

"The Prince de Conti, delighted, told his daughter of the good fortune which awaited her. This was before she had been seen at Court, but she had heard much of the Duke of Chartres, and her girlish imagination was all on fire; but she was a proud beauty, and this delay of a year before her suitor proposed to present himself gave her matter for thought. As her parents made preparations for her marriage as though the affair were settled,

she announced wilfully that it must not be so considered, for unless she were assured that the Duke loved her for herself alone, and, moreover, unless after meeting him she were certain of her own affection, she would in no wise marry him. This romantic notion put the Prince de Conti in despair. He reported it to the King, praying him to bid the Duke of Chartres to manifest some show of interest in his future bride, were it only by a letter.

"Louis repeated this as a good jest to his daughters. 'Chartres is like to have difficult wooing unless he sets about it at once,' he commented.

"Some blindness kept the King from seeing that Madame Henriette was not long for this world; but this conviction had come to me, for at this time I was painting another portrait of her, the full-length in the red dress, with her favourite 'cello, for she was a sensitive musician. They had touched her cheeks with rouge and her eyes sparkled brightly, but I knew by her great weakness, which made frequent rests necessary, that she was slipping from us day by day. I painted fast, inspired by the unearthly beauty which I longed to fix upon the canvas, but which eluded my skill.

"One day she asked me, smilingly: 'Monsieur Nattier, I know that you love your wife; if she died, would you wed again?'

"'God forbid,' I replied, 'that I be put to the test! I love my wife, 't is true, but were she taken from me in early life—it is a hard, hard question. The world is a lonely place, and I am but a man.'

"'I understand you,' she answered, and the tears came to her eyes; 'neither men nor women can nourish their hearts upon memories, we must all love or die.'

"She said no more that day, but the next she told me of her plot to bring the Duke of Chartres back to love and life.

"'Henriette de Bourbon-Conti is not more *exigeante* than every woman should be,' she said. 'She will not consent to this marriage without some sign from Philippe, and that he will not give. I want you to help me, Monsieur Nattier. See, here all are the letters which he ever wrote me. They all begin "My dearest Henriette," but there is nothing in any one of them that betrays that it was written to me personally. Do you not understand? They might all have been written to the Princess of Conti just as well as to me; if only Philippe had loved her, for our names



MADAME HENRIETTE, DAUGHTER OF LOUIS XV.

From the painting by Nattier.

By permission of Neurdein Frères.

are the same. Even the fact that they have never met makes no difference, for he says in the first: "I saw you on horseback in the forest when you did not know that I was one of the hunting party." There is no reference from the first to the last that would enlighten her.'

"I opened my eyes in amazement, for I only half understood her meaning.

"'Listen, Monsieur Nattier,' she explained patiently; 'I am going to die. Do not shake your head. I know it, and I am not very sorry; I am so tired. I would like to have these letters in my coffin to keep me warm in the dark.'

"I promised with moist eyes that I would have them so placed.

"'Nay,' she replied, 'they have a better part to play. Our pledge to each other was so long as we both should live. There is no marrying or giving in marriage where I am going. You are soon to paint the portrait of the Princesse de Conti. When I have gone, I want you to give these letters to her one by one at intervals. Say only that they are sent her through you, by one far away who had no other means of sending them. That will be quite true, but she will think that they come

from Philippe, that he loves her, and she cannot resist them, for I could not.'

"'But,' I suggested, 'if the Princess answers the letters, what will the Duke think? No good can come of such deception, for, though she may learn to love him, he does not love her.'

"'He will love her,' she replied faintly, 'when I am gone, and he knows that I wished it, and that Henriette loves him. He will love her at first for my sake, and then for her own. It will all end well.'

"'Then you will write the Duke what you intend to do?' I asked.

"'After it is done; but I have no one to trust to send my message to him. I will leave the letter with you to give to him when he returns to France.'

"'He will not return,' I replied.

"'Then I will write a note to be sent him with the news of my death, asking him to go to you to learn my last wishes. He will return. It will be all right.'

"I had many misgivings, but Madame Henriette insisted with the gentle tyranny of the dying, and I could not refuse. I saw her but once after this, when she gave me the two letters for the Duke of Chartres. 'I have

your promise,' she said, and a few days later, very suddenly, the end came.

"I did not immediately carry out the desires of the Princess. I doubted not that the Duke of Chartres would hear of the death of his beloved and be overwhelmed by it, and although their parting had been hopeless, still it was not the moment to suggest that life could ever be aught for him but desolation.

"It was therefore not until the last month of the year which the King had granted him that I, being then engaged upon the portrait of the Princesse de Conti, realised that I must either bestir myself at once or prove recreant to my trust.

"This conviction was brought to bear upon me by the Princess herself, for when in some way that I do not now recall I referred to the Duke, I saw that she loved him even then, but was piqued by his silence.

"So I gave her the first letter, and her happiness for the moment took away all suspicion.

"It chanced, too, that the matter of this letter fell wonderfully into line with the present situation, for the Duke protested that he had long loved her, but that, conscious of

the disapproval of the King, it behooved him to absent himself for a time from Court, and he begged her to keep him in remembrance and await his return.

“But presently, her judgment asserting itself, she asked—

“‘When did you receive this letter, Monsieur Nattier?’

“I confessed that I had it shortly after the Duke went to England, but that I had had no opportunity to give it to her privately, as her sittings had been delayed.

“‘Ah!’ she cried, ‘and how he must have wondered that he received no answer from me! I will mend that speedily.’ Taking pen and paper she wrote a hasty note, which she confided to me, to send the Duke, and left my studio in a flutter of excitement which augured well for the success of the plot—so far as one of the parties was concerned.

“Matters having gone thus far, I thought it time to send the Duke Madame Henriette’s letter, bidding him seek me out to learn her last wishes; but I retained the note which the Princesse de Conti had just written him until he should be better prepared for it.

“The week following, the Princess came to my studio accompanied by her father, who

vowed and declared at the end of the sitting that my portrait was so perfect that not another stroke should be added to the face, and that it was unnecessary for his daughter to visit me again. While this flattered my artist pride, I could see that it displeased the Princess, who found much fault, and insisted on further sittings. I would have been hurt had I not comprehended that she wished for an excuse for maintaining her correspondence with the Duke of Chartres, and when the Prince de Conti's back was turned, I slipped into her hand the second of his letters.

"‘I will find a way to come again,’ she whispered, and she called soon after with her friend Mademoiselle de Boufflers, ostensibly to give me the commission for an allegorical painting of Hebe, but she gave me stealthily her answer to the letter which she had received at our last interview. She had a hundred suggestions to make in regard to the desired painting, and promised to come and see my sketch, and confer with me concerning the type of model to be used for the goddess.

"This was scarcely settled to her satisfaction and the last of the letters which I held in trust delivered to the Princess when I was startled one morning by the announcement,

at an earlier hour than visitors are wont to present themselves, of the arrival of his Highness the Duke of Chartres.

“He wrung my hand and the tears came to his eyes, for the last time that he visited my studio I was painting the Flora from Madame Henriette. He sat silently for some time, overcome by his memories; then rousing himself, he said: ‘You have another letter for me from her!’

“I gave it to him, but, though he read it twice, he failed fully to grasp its meaning.

“‘She wishes me to marry the Princess of Conti,’ he said; ‘but that can never be. My heart is dead. I have forgotten how to love.’

“In vain I urged the King’s displeasure which he had returned just in time to avert. As futile also my praises of the Princess and my regret that, her portrait having been sent home, I could not convince him of her attractiveness. He shook his head resolutely.

“‘I shall not approach her, but will immediately return to my exile in England. I have found friends there, and though life has lost its joy, I shall not be stabbed to the heart by continual reminders of my lost love or by impossible demands to fill her place. I swear to you, Nattier, that the shrine is

empty, and I shall never set another idol on its throne.'

"He was in earnest and rose to leave as one who had uttered his ultimatum.

"'But the Princess of Conti!' I cried, desperately. 'What is to become of her?' Is she to be abandoned so lightly when she fancies herself beloved by you?'

"'I have done nothing to win her affection,' he replied. 'I have spoken no word. She must realise that I am not bound in honour because his Majesty has seen fit to propose for her hand in my name without my consent.'

"'But your letters,' I insisted; 'do you not yet understand what Madame Henriette has done? She sent the love letters which you wrote to her to Henriette de Bourbon-Conti. You are compromised, for she believes you wrote them to her.'

"'My God!' he exclaimed. 'Henriette did that! Then she could never have loved me!'

"'It was because she loved you,' I insisted, 'with a strange, supernatural passion of which we men are not capable, a maternal affection, we may almost call it, preferring, as it did, your happiness to all other considerations, and foreseeing that the time would

come when your heart would hunger again, that she did this thing. The letters have been sent. Henriette de Bourbon-Conti has no suspicion that they do not express your sentiments toward her, and I believe on my soul that the poor lady loves you.'

"‘She loves me!’ the Duke repeated in consternation. ‘No, no, that would be too unfortunate, for I tell you again that it is impossible. I will write to her and disclaim the letters, for it cannot be.’

"At that instant we were both startled by a sneeze, then another and another, three quick feminine sneezes, muffled, but still unmistakable and exploding against the will of the victim, who was hidden from view by screens which formed a dressing-room at the end of my studio. A door from the outer hall afforded communication with this dressing-room, and I had not perceived the entrance of my model.

"‘We are not alone!’ the Duke exclaimed, in consternation.

"‘Apparently not, Monsieur,’ the saucy marplot replied, and there was a *frou-frou* of silk and a whiff of perfume as she flounced into the room with a low courtesy, making the inopportune entry which I have hinted at

in the beginning of this recital, and which was destined to have such important consequences.

"She was personable, or she would have been no model of mine, and I shall have more to say of her personal attractions, but I had never seen her so bewitching, at once so provoking, and so irresistible as at that moment. The colour of her cheeks was as high as though they had been rouged, and her voice had a spice of malice as she declared, with a toss of her pretty head:

"Believe me, sir, that I am most unexpectedly and unwillingly an eavesdropper, and that had I not been engaged in a change of costume I would have made my appearance sooner.'

"You overheard us, then,' the Duke replied coldly. 'Who is this person, Monsieur Nattier?'

"Only an artist's model,' she replied defiantly, taking the words from my mouth; 'a *person* of no consideration, whose name does not signify. You may call me Hebe if you choose to honour me with further conversation, since it is for that character I have come to pose. But, believe me, that though I am only a poor girl, Monsieur, unwilling confidence is safe with me.'

“‘I think you can trust her,’ I said, as she took her place with dignity upon the model-stand. The Duke looked at her doubtfully, but, struck by something of earnestness beneath the bravado, said frankly:

“‘Mademoiselle, I am at your mercy. You have just heard a passage of my history inexpressibly sacred to me. More than this, you are in the possession of a secret which concerns a certain noble lady whom I respect deeply. It is a secret which only we three know.’

“‘And which I promise you that no one else shall ever know,’ she replied simply; and then she destroyed the respect which she was beginning to inspire by declaring flippantly: ‘Your revelations are already forgotten, for I never concern myself with the love affairs of other women, having more of my own than I can properly attend to.’

“‘I can well believe you, Mademoiselle,’ the Duke replied gallantly, but with a touch of displeasure in his voice. Though he had been on the point of leaving he sat down and watched her moodily. He was angry that involuntarily he should have divulged so much of his most intimate history to a perfect stranger, and he wished to know what

manner of woman had so unexpectedly arrived at this one-sided intimacy.

"As for Hebe, some influence which I did not understand put her upon her mettle.

"She was always sprightly, frequently mischievous, but I had never seen her so piquant, so daring, and so altogether entrancing. She took no notice of the Duke's taciturnity and disapproval, but told merry stories, sang scraps of songs, took an hundred charming attitudes, and made it necessary for me to cry out at her as many times for not keeping the pose of the picture. She alone of all who sat for my divinities was every inch a goddess. She looked it more than ever that day in the ample white robe which broke from its classical folds and rippled like flowing water about her perfect form. Over this, and around and behind her I swept a drapery of soft silk of as deep a blue as lapis-lazuli, which melted into the blue sky of my background, where it floated mist-like between billowy clouds. It is a treatment of costume which I have frequently employed for my mythological subjects.

"It pleased Hebe to scoff at this mannerism as a new mode which I was attempting to make the fashion.

“‘One of our art critics has said,’ she reported, ‘that though it is not precisely adapted to the street, nevertheless we shall soon see women of the highest rank giving up their paniers for this *négligé*. The only difficulty is with the mantle, which floats off in such pretty curves simply because Monsieur Nattier wills it to do so. The same clever writer advises the ladies to provide themselves with a retinue of pages with bellows, to act the part of Zephyrs and to keep this drapery properly agitated in graceful convolutions.’

“I had represented her pouring nectar into a *patera*, from which an eagle was drinking. She made sport of this very natural treatment of my subject, asking if a lap-dog would not serve my purpose as well, since she was not accustomed to so uncouth a pet. The Greek pitcher which I had given her to hold pleased her no better. It was not sufficiently ornate; she would bring a bit of jewelled plate of her father’s at her next coming.

“The Duke marked this slip, and said quickly: ‘Your father is a collector of such costly trifles? It is an expensive taste.’

“‘My father is a goldsmith,’ she answered readily enough, but she felt that he did not

believe her, and blushed in answer to his incredulous smile.

“‘I am something of a connoisseur in such matters,’ he said. ‘Your father’s shop is doubtless on the Quai des Orfèvres. If you will give me his address he may find me a patron worth the having.’

“She shook her head saucily. ‘I am not a herald of my father’s craft. He would rather miss a sale of his wares than that I should bring home fine gallants like your lordship.’

“He took that retort as his *congé* and left us, and indeed it was time, for the conversation had been much more lengthy than I have reported, with more of badinage, which I cannot now recall, and it was time for my model to go.

“After this whenever I painted from Hebe the Duke was present, an attentive observer and listener. I did not immediately see how matters were tending, confiding in his declaration that his heart was broken past all repair; and having no eyes save for my art I fancied that he found entertainment in admiring my skill. Nor could I have forbidden him my studio had I so desired, seeing that I occupied my apartment only through the sufferance of the Duke, his father, for

it was in the old palace of the Temple of which the Duke of Orléans was the Grand Prior. I was, therefore, in a sort a guest in one of the homes of the Duke of Chartres, and my studio was his proper lounging-place. The greater part of the building was unoccupied and furnished him a retired refuge in the centre of Paris until he should choose to present himself at Court.

"And here it were well that I should make you understand what a wonderful old castle was this ancient commandery of the Knights Templars, which, after the suppression of their order, had passed to the Hospitallers or Knights of Saint John of Jerusalem. Not the Bastille itself was a stronger fortress than its great donjon tower, which would have seemed more fitting in some lonely mountain pass than here in the heart of a great city. Indeed, Paris seemed very far away when once I had crossed the moat, and the portcullis of the barbican had fallen behind me. There were other buildings besides the tower within the *enceinte*, notably a chapel and the noble residence of the Grand Prior.

"The Duke of Orléans, who was of a deeply religious turn of mind, strangely unlike his father the Regent, or his son, had taken much

pleasure in this office and in the dignified residence which had something pontifical in its appearance, and had commissioned me to adorn its somewhat bare salons with suitable allegorical paintings of Force and Justice, and the like. In return I had my studio and suite of living apartments here, and was allowed, as I have shown, to undertake other commissions.

"The Duke of Chartres had returned to France secretly, for he knew not how matters stood between him and the King, but his love for his father was such that, finding himself in such safe retirement, he could not forbear begging him to come to him secretly. The Duke of Orléans was overjoyed by the return of his son; but he could not at once see him, for he had unfortunately gone into temporary retreat at the monastery of Sainte Genevieve, for he had fully made up his mind to retire permanently from the world, and was preparing himself for this step. He wrote his son a most affectionate letter, assuring him that he desired nothing so warmly as to see him invested with all the honours and possessions which were so distasteful to himself, but which his respect for the existing order of things made him feel should be

worthily continued by one of his race. He fixed a date when the Duke of Chartres might meet him at his château of Saint Cloud, when he would make as solemn a transfer and farewell as though he were on his death-bed.

"The Duke of Chartres could only await his convenience, and as he supposed that his return was known to no one else he kept himself close at the Temple. He found the great, rambling house very lonely, and it was not strange that he resorted continually to my studio for company. My wife, who touches the harpsichord with some little skill, did what she could for his diversion, but we soon saw that the chief attraction of our studio to the Duke lay not in my paintings or our society, but in that of my model.

"Sometimes he would stroll with her through the long suite of stately rooms, explaining the escutcheons of the knights with which the walls were decorated, and at such times my wife, who had a great love for our little Hebe, as well as a woman's talent for match-making, would hinder me from following them. Once I forgot her orders and burst incontinently upon them as their heads were bent together over a great illuminated



TEA AT THE TEMPLE.

From a painting by Olivier in the Louvre.

By permission of Neurdein Frères.

(The young Mozart is at the piano.)

missal; but I was far from understanding the extent of the mischief until these interviews, which had gone on during the entire month of May, were suddenly ended, and the crisis precipitated by the arrival of another letter from the Duke of Orléans.

"I was painting in the little parterre, for the early roses were in bloom and had covered the trellis so thickly that the Duke and Hebe, who were seated within it, did not notice that I was painting on the other side of the sun-dial.

"A servant brought the letter, and the conversation that ensued was carried on with such frankness that I had at first no idea that I had no right to overhear it or that they were unaware of my presence.

" 'What does your father say?' asked Hebe, for the Duke had uttered an exclamation of dismay on glancing at the contents of the letter.

" 'Come, you shall know,' he replied, 'and advise me, too, for here is a sad coil'; and he read his father's reminder that the time had now come, since he had finished his retreat, when he could receive his son. He set the following day for the transaction of the important business to which he had referred in his former letter, the signing of the legal docu-

ments which would transfer to the Duke of Chartres all his estates and titles, and he informed him that the King himself would be at Saint Cloud to witness this renunciation and put his seal of approval upon the transaction. Surprising as this was, it was, however, the following statement, that the Prince de Conti and his daughter would also be present, and that the formal betrothal and all settlements of dowry could be arranged at the same time, which drew from the Duke his sudden cry of consternation.

“His agitation seemed to give Hebe malicious pleasure. ‘I do not see any reason for lamentation,’ she said maliciously. ‘You have had the situation before you ever since your return, and have done nothing.’

“‘I beg your pardon,’ he contradicted. ‘I have requested Monsieur Nattier to explain it to the Princess; to tell her that I had no part in weaving this cruel net of circumstances which has caught us both in its meshes, and to beg her to cut the knots by refusing to marry me.’

“‘Was it not rather late to do this after the Princess had compromised herself by sending you her written acceptance of your supposed offer of marriage?’

“But I have not read her letters. I asked Monsieur Nattier to return them to her unopened, and he assured me that he had done so. Why should I, why do you, assume that she ever thought favourably of me?”

“I was only thinking what might have happened if she had met you as I have; but forgive me if I have pained you,—I had forgotten that your heart is dead, that you can never love again.’

“She spoke now with no tone of raillery, but simply and earnestly.

“‘Nay,’ he exclaimed, passionately, ‘it is because, incomprehensibly to me, the tides of life have swept irresistibly back, and I have learned for the first time to love in a human way, for the other passion was not love, but adoration. It is because I love you, Hebe, with all my heart that this thing is impossible.’

“There was utter silence after this, and I knew as well as if I had seen them that her arms were about his neck. Then suddenly she spoke. ‘But do you love me enough to give up the *Princesse de Conti* for my sake? I must be your wife, Philippe, though a tradesman's daughter without rank or fortune.’

“‘Thank God,’ he replied, ‘that you are willing to marry me! It is the proudest moment of my life.’

“‘But you may have to give up all your possessions in France; the Palais Royal, the beautiful château of Saint Cloud with its fountain staircase,—even this dear Temple. What if it means exile, Philippe, and poverty?’

“‘I am sorry for your sake,’ he replied, gravely, ‘that it may be so. Will you go with me, Hebe?’

“Again there was silence, and though I judged the answer satisfactory, the foolish tears came to my eyes for no reason that I can explain, and, angry with myself for such unmanly weakness, I coughed loudly, and they both burst upon me, laughing and blushing, and the Duke dusted my coat well, unmindful of my rheumatism, while Hebe kissed me on both cheeks.

“But this was but the beginning of trouble for us all; and I am well aware that for a man who has been honoured by the patronage and friendship of such a woman as Henriette de Bourbon-Conti, such action on my part must seem not only inexplicable but dishonourable. For even then I was in correspondence with her, and that evening I

presented the Duke with her reply to his appeal to her to end all complications by refusing him. And most astounding to the Duke was her answer, for the Princess wrote him coldly that as their faith had been sacredly pledged to each other by letters written over their own signatures, matters had now gone too far, not alone for his credit with the King, but for his honour and hers, for legal acts had been drawn up and their friends generally invited by both their fathers to their betrothal upon the morrow.

"As for his declaration that his heart was given to another, that was no concern of hers, and what she should now insist on before his Majesty was not that he should love her, but that he should marry her. This she would in no wise give up, and so she signed herself: 'Your wife that is to be,—HENRIETTE.'

"I have never seen the Prince in such a rage. 'I tried to save her!' he ejaculated; 'but since she refuses to relinquish me privately, I will go and humiliate her before all the world, for no power on earth can make me accept her as my wife.'

"It was with many misgivings that I saw him ride away the next morning, and a few

moments later heard the carriage of the Princess rumble into the court, surrounded by all her liveried outriders and guards. She had come to do me the honour of asking me to escort her to Saint Cloud, since I might be needed to testify that I had acted as postman in the matter of the letters. I could not refuse, though the cold perspiration stood upon my face, for I like not to face angry people, and I knew that now the whole truth must out. Then, too, I am an honest admirer of the Princess, and I feared that the Duke of Orléans might have spoken his mind too freely to her father before he could be restrained by her wonderful beauty.

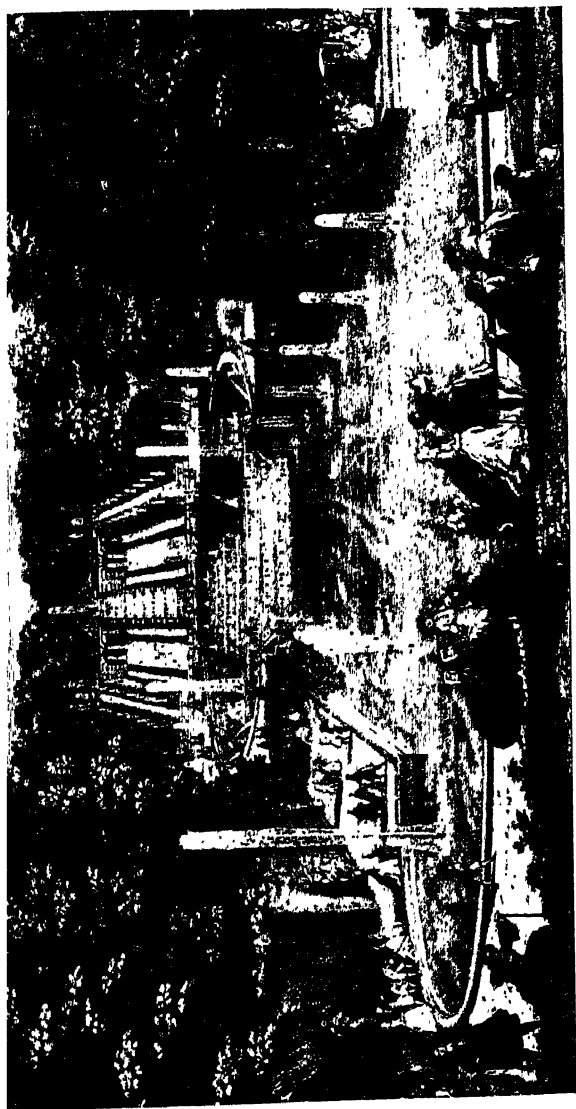
"I have never seen her more regally robed than on this which she deemed was her betrothal morning. She wore the jewels of all her maternal ancestors, some of which had been the gifts of kings, and her ermine-lined mantle was embroidered in gold with the Bourbon *fleur-de-lys*.

"'It is a great game that I am playing. Do you think that I will win him, Monsieur Nattier?' she asked.

"'Doubtless,' I acquiesced dutifully.

"'He was furious, you say,—furious?'

"'Yes, my lady.'



THE CASCADE OF ST. CLOUD.

From an engraving by Rigaud.

“‘Was it because he liked not to be coerced by a woman?’

“‘Nay,’ I stammered, ‘I know one woman who winds him about her finger.’

“‘Think you that he will hold to her to-day? Will he have the hardihood to say to my face that he will none of me?’

“‘Not when he sees that face,’ I replied, for she wore a driving mask which concealed her features. ‘Either way, through love or compulsion, you have him in your hands, for there is no other alternative for the Duke now but the Bastile.’

“‘And that is not such an agreeable residence as Saint Cloud,’ she said. ‘It seems to me that that reflection may have occurred to him as he rode up this avenue. But how I shall despise him if he has yielded!’

“Saint Cloud was in gala array. The houses along the river were hung with bright stuffs and garlands. Huzzas rang out as we dashed by. The royal guards were drawn up in salute on either side of the avenue within the great grille, and the tumultuous, frothing waters were tumbling over Le Pautre's regal marbles, while the lovely hillside garden of Le Nôtre was ablaze with brilliant flowers and glittering with white statues.

"The palace, too, was adorned for the festival, and the Court was arriving in state coaches, adorned with Martin's gold-dusted panels.

"We were greeted with sweeps of plumed hats and low courtesies that crushed the flowered brocades into delicious folds of light and shadow. I saw it all with half-shut eyes, and thought with a pang that Watteau was gone, and Boucher, and only men of little talents like mine left to make note of this fairy scene, with its opulence of delicious colour and its grace of fair women.

"Suddenly I was brought back from my artistic revelling by finding myself in the library of the Duke of Orléans. Louis the Fifteenth sat in the high-backed *fauteuil*, a fine presence of a man yet, though it was only the outer shell with all its manhood eaten out by self-indulgence. On his left stood the Prince de Conti, the picture of offended dignity, stammering with surprise as he shook his hand threateningly at the Duke of Chartres, who had just spoken, and was standing with folded arms, while his father had sunk into a chair, the picture of grief and mortification.

"'So you will not marry my daughter!'

stuttered the Prince de Conti. 'What does this comedy mean, sir?'

"'Think twice before you answer,' said the King; 'do not offend me or insult the lady, for she is here.' And, rising, he gave his hand gallantly to the Princess.

"'Let me remove this little mask, and we will see if this obdurate boy can resist your charms.'

"But the Duke raised his hand in deprecation. 'The Prince de Conti has spoken truly in calling this a comedy, and as no one knows better than the Princess my unalterable decision to marry only the woman whom I love it is for her to answer her father's question, and tell you why I have been put to this ordeal.'

"'In order, Monsieur, that you should make this very satisfactory declaration,' the Princess replied demurely, at the same time raising her mask and regarding the Duke with an archness which did not quite hide the great relief which his words had given her.

"Never in my life have I seen such stupefaction and rapture chase each other on any human countenance as they did upon the face of the Duke as he realized how he had been played upon. His arms were around her in an instant. 'You minx!' he said."



CHAPTER VII

THE LADIES OF LE LUDE

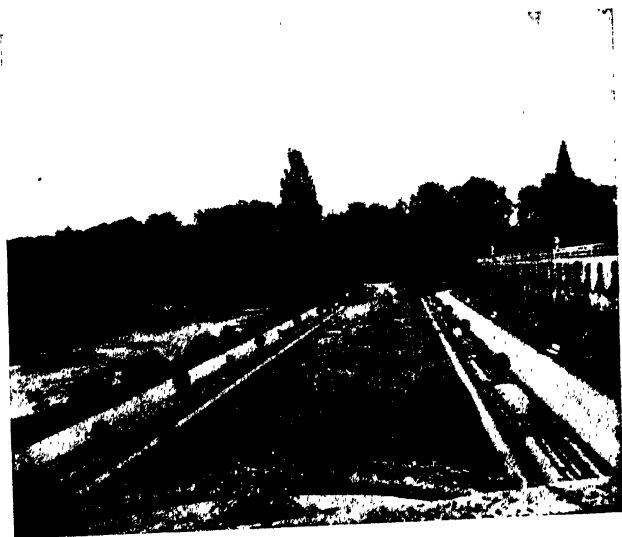
Would you danger dire elude
Bring your lady to Le Lude.

LA GRANDE CHASSERESSE.

THE Marquis's face blanched as he read the poor attempt at verse which he had found written on a bit of yellow parchment, and twisted about the collar of his favourite hound.

"Who sent me this message, Diane?" he asked, looking into the dog's hazel eyes. The intelligent creature whimpered and cowered uneasily at his feet.

"What a pity you cannot talk, Diane! You have been coursing at your own free will in the forest, naughty truant! It must have been a long chase and a hard one, for you are covered with burrs and are panting with weariness; but there is no blood on your chops, and your game must have escaped



CHÂTEAU AND GARDENS OF LE LUDE.
W. H. Charnsey.

you. You look frightened as well as exhausted. Is it possible that you were the quarry instead of the huntress, and that you have been chased by some evil beast?" The dog fawned upon him as though claiming his protection.

"Was it a wild boar, Diane? Speak when I have guessed right. It was not a boar,—was it a wolf, then? No? You are certainly not so cowardly as to run from a stag or from the pack of some unfriendly hunter. You bark. You are served right for poaching, my girl, for you have been ignominiously whipped from the royal preserves by one of the King's gamekeepers. Wrong again, am I? What sort of human being was it, then, who frightened you so? Well, Diane, I give it up, unless, as this message indicates, you really have been met by the phantom huntress."

The hound howled and bolted for the kennels as though she had been struck, and the Marquis, as he studied the bold script of the message, could not doubt that it was indeed the autograph of the ancient dame who was at once the good and evil angel of his family. A similar warning had come whenever dishonour menaced a daughter of the house, and woe to those who disregarded the monition!

The Marquis of Vieuville and Le Lude knew what he must do, but it was particularly disagreeable to leave Versailles just now, for never was the Court more intoxicating than in the last years of the reign of the fifteenth Louis, when it gave itself up to an inconsequential enjoyment of the present, responding, "So let it be" to the King's "*Après nous la déluge!*"

What a hardship to tear himself away from this round of gaiety, from these evenings—

"'Neath waxlight in the glorified salon,
Where mirrors multiplied the girandole;"

and where, over the cards, rouleaux of louis d'or changed hands with polite nonchalance, and the wine flushed through the rouge on the cheeks of aristocratic women—to shut himself up with his wife in the dulness of his country château!

Why was not the Marquise as contented as himself at Versailles? It was a wife's duty to be pleased with whatever locality pleased her husband. Was not he with her? He could not doubt her love for him, for her conspicuous adoration would have seemed amusing if it had not been pathetic. His voice in another room would set little flickering smiles

playing like the shadows of white butterflies about her pretty mouth, and at times, when he was complimenting some belle of the Court, a swift, appealing glance irritated him with its heart-hunger and unconscious reproach. The Marquis was not absolutely indifferent; he was flattered by her devotion, for he recognised her worth, and he pooh-poohed scornfully as he re-read the disconcerting missive. In danger of losing his wife's affection—absurd! Whatever danger threatened, it could not be that. True, others had recognised her attractiveness. The King himself had pointed out her resemblance to one of the most admired of all the statues in the garden of Versailles, the *Nymph with the Shell*, the masterpiece of the sculptor Coysevox.

"I do not wonder," the gallant Louis had said, as he paused before the statue, "that this ravishing nymph attracts the god Pan himself from the deepest recesses of the wood. See, he has boldly ventured out in our very presence to ogle the beauty whose modesty is so tantalising."

The King pointed to a term with the face of a satyr, which chance had placed near the Nymph, and which seemed to be leering fatuously at the prize which he was powerless to reach.

"His adoration is harmless, sire," the Marquise had replied, "for the goddess Latona has spied him from her fountain, and has turned him to stone."

"It is a thousand pities," said Louis, and his handsome face was marred by an evil sneer, "that the ladies of our own day have no such superhuman protection."

"Sire, the ladies of Le Lude have such a guardian," the Marquis had replied; and, pressed by the King, he had told the tradition of La Grande Chasseresse.

It was not so ancient a legend as to have gathered to itself much exaggeration in passing from one story-teller to another, for this famous huntress, Elenore Daillon, had lived during the reign of Louis XIV., and had been the wife of that Marquis of Le Lude so noted as a brilliant cavalier. He was the intimate friend of Madame de Sévigné, who wrote of him, only half in jest, that it was a great pity that he was not free to marry a *certain young widow*, whose feelings toward him she well knew, but would not divulge. His wife was as averse to society as he was enamoured of it. She came to Versailles but once, and that was to bid farewell to her husband when he accompanied the King to the wars. On this

occasion Madame de Sévigné and other ladies found much sport in her masculine slouched hat of red felt adorned with its sweeping ostrich plume, and her dusty redingote, for she disdained the luxury of a coach, and had ridden all the way from Le Lude. But the Grand Monarque said that she was as interesting to talk to as a man, and he had shown her his stables and kennels, giving her the pick of his dogs. She chose a black wolfhound, and rode back to Le Lude as she had come. La Grande Chasseresse deserved her sobriquet, for hunting was her passion. She was a good shot, a reckless rider, and as ruthless to brutal men as to savage animals.

In the absence of her husband she exercised high and petty justice in her domain, and caused drunken wife-beaters to be flogged with interest, and many a brigand to be hung. She had a high and stern regard for virtue, and constituted herself its protector. Learning that the priest of the village had ill-treated one of her serving-women, she rode into the church, beat him from before the altar and out of the sacred edifice with her heavily thonged riding-whip, and, setting her great hound upon him, coursed him to his death, as she would have done any other

dangerous brute. Her exploits did not end with her life. Long after her death, hunters heard the sound of her horn, the crack of her whip, her ringing shout, and the deep baying of her hound, with a rapid accompaniment of galloping hoofs, all distinctly clear, but apparently under the ground, beneath their very feet. At these sinister sounds they crossed themselves, ejaculating, "God have mercy on the sinner whom La Grande Chasseresse is coursing!" and forthwith repented themselves if their own ways were evil.

Louis XV. had laughed when the Marquis related this legend. "It is doubtless because I am such a model of virtue," he said, mockingly, "that I have never heard those subterranean sounds, and have so far escaped the attention of your amiable ancestress. But my cousin of Condé, who loved every man's wife but his own, may have been honoured by her company, for it is said that he died delirious, fancying himself pursued by phantom huntsmen."

"La Grande Chasseresse pursues those alone who menace the women of Le Lude," said the Marquis, "and your Majesty need not fear her; but the late Prince de Condé may have suffered from her vengeance, for he

was an avowed admirer of a little Chinese Marquise who drifted into our château, along with many beautiful specimens of Oriental art, almost within my own memory."

"A Chinese Marquise of Le Lude! How did that happen, and why was she never seen at Court?"

"My uncle, please your Majesty, was a director of the East India Company, and went several times to China, where he married the daughter of a mandarin. The Prince de Condé was connected with him in his financial enterprises, and on his return from the East, the Marquis of Le Lude with his bride, visited his associate at his château of Chantilly. The odd little foreigner, with her pet whiskered marmosets, amused the Prince. "You love your monkeys," he said to his guest on one occasion, "without doubt because they resemble us men."

"But no, Most Excellent," she replied; "I like you men because you so fascinatingly resemble my monkeys."

"The Prince de Condé commissioned Watteau to paint her portrait in the Chinese boudoir of his château, for the Prince became suddenly an amateur of Chinese art. Ivory carvings, sumptuous embroideries, wonders

of lacquer, jade, and porcelain filled Chantilly. People said it was all to please the Marquise; but one day her husband received a warning from La Grande Chasseresse, and he carried her off to our château on the Loir.

"All went well for a time, and all might have continued to go well, had my uncle not taken it into his head to make another voyage to China. The Prince de Condé wished more curios, which none could select so well as he. He never returned, but was murdered at Macao, by his valet, who had some unaccountable reason for killing a most indulgent master."

"Did my cousin of Condé ever visit Le Lude?" asked the King.

"No, sire, he died shortly after the Marquis. You have told us under what circumstances. La Grande Chasseresse is a faithful guardian of the ladies of Le Lude."

"The widowed Marquise returned to China, and as my uncle left no descendants, his title and estates have devolved upon me. Apparently the ladies of our family are now abundantly able to take care of themselves, for always when in danger the phantom huntress sends a message to their husbands, and none has been received by this generation."

The King laughed uneasily. "If your kinswomen are all as beautiful as the present châtelaine of Le Lude, La Grande Chasseresse must have hunting to her heart's content," he said, cavalierly; and when unobserved, he added to the Marquise: "I know a man who for your sake would dare your ancestral hobgoblin, or death itself."

It was only a few days since the Marquis of Le Lude had related these episodes of his family history to Louis XV., and now the warning had come to him. What could it mean? Not danger of that kind. She was too pure a spirit for even a demon to presume. Perhaps it was her health which was menaced. This feverish life could not be good for her, though he, of course, could lead it with impunity. He had noticed of late that she was pale and listless. Yes, they must be off to Le Lude, and the Marquise brightened from the moment that he announced this decision.

"But how will you amuse yourself," she asked, "in that lonely, antiquated château?"

"'T is fortunate," he replied, "that it is antiquated, for it will give us employment. We will restore it. We will take with us the

best of books on all the arts, and instruct ourselves before we have down the architects and landscape gardeners who are to carry out our wishes. The beautifying of the castle and the estate will be an absorbing study, a worthy task for a lifetime, and a noble heritage to leave our children and our country."

The Marquise was delighted to witness his kindling enthusiasm. She fed the flame, and hastened their departure. Following down the lovely valley of the Loir they came to their home, the most beautiful castle in all that enchanting region, and worthy rival of the exquisite sisterhood of Touraine, for it was built in the same period of magical artistic creation, the earliest French Renaissance. You will see the statue of the first seigneur of the castle, Jehan Daillon, on the north wall, sitting his caparisoned steed, as Louis XII. sits his over the entrance to the château of Blois. The four round towers which flank the angles of the castle are bossed by medallions simulating windows, from which the sculptured heads of Charles VIII. and the noted men of his reign crane their necks and call to one another in the dumb language of the long dead, but with most living looks and gestures.

All over the white outer walls runs a fanciful broidery of carving; arabesques and intertwined monograms, heraldic animals, wolves, and rams, and fabulous mermaids, sporting amidst all the graceful, impossible leafage of that most imaginative period of artistry; while within the château the two magnificent spiral staircases are cut into lacework of flamboyant tracery reminiscent of the last period of Gothic architecture.

Between two of the towers of this castle of his forbears the Marquis added a wing in the more simple and ordered style of the eighteenth century. Stately and beautiful, we must grant, even when compared with the ornate and picturesque styles of the earlier periods of the castle, and as different from the other portions of the building as was the life of this time, with its formalities, its refinements, its philosophies, and its elegancies, from the poetic, wilful, lawless, but enchanting existence of the sixteenth century.

No château in France marks the architectural transformation by worthier examples of the two styles than Le Lude. The master and mistress of the castle looked at their work with satisfaction; it was worthy to stand beside that of Daillon. Before they had

quite completed their task and were still enjoying its exaltation, a most disturbing message was brought them.

The King was on his way to Tours, and had decided to vary his usual route in order to visit them. He was now at Courtanvaux, where they might notify him if his visit was acceptable. There was only one answer to be returned; though the Marquis's face grew dark, and his lady's foot beat the floor with annoyance. They were so happy as they were,—why should this intruder thrust himself upon them? Louis brought only his personal attendants, having sent the greater part of his retinue on to Tours, and, begging his host and hostess not to inconvenience themselves on his account, he strove to make himself agreeable to both lord and lady, though he felt the slight coolness in their perfect courtesy.

On the morning of the third day and the last that he was to spend at the château, he was walking discontentedly on the long terrace overlooking the lower garden, which the winding Loir separates from the game-abounding forest, where later he would hunt with the Marquis and a few neighbours who had been asked to bear him company. He

was in bad humour, for he had expected to find the Marquise pining in this seclusion, and she was too evidently happy. Both she and her husband had thanked him for his assurance that they were missed at Court, but had begged his gracious permission to remain at Le Lude. His visit had not answered his expectations, but he was loath to retire baffled, or to admit even to himself that he was not irresistible. Only the previous evening he had jestingly asked the Marquis if he would show him the portrait of the formidable Grande Chasseresse, and her sternly scowling features beneath the shadow of the felt hat had impressed him most unpleasantly.

"We have the very hat itself," said the Marquis, "it hangs above her *pistolet d'arcon* in the *salle d'armes*, a fit companion to the helmet and battle-axe of Jehan Daillon." But when they entered the guard-chamber, the Marquis uttered an exclamation of surprise, for the space on the wall usually occupied by these souvenirs of his ancestress was vacant!

"It must be that she is on one of her hunting expeditions," the Marquise declared, excitedly. "They disappear and return in the same inexplicable way at intervals, and at

such times our old gamekeeper invariably reports that she has been heard on her rounds beneath the forest, and always after such manifestations some ne'er-do-well has been found killed mysteriously, and no explanation has ever been arrived at as to the cause of his death."

The Marquis looked at his wife in surprise. "It is strange that I should never have heard of anything of the kind," he muttered; "I did not know that she had appeared in our times."

"She has not forgotten the humblest peasant girl on our estate," replied the Marquise; "I still trust in her protection."

As though this uncanny suggestion that the phantom huntress were not enough, or possibly influenced by the conversation, the King had dreamed disagreeably of the virago, and had started awake from the fancy that her clutch was on his throat, to hear the deep-toned barking of a hound beneath his window. He had complained of this disturbance in the morning, only to be assured by his host that he must be mistaken, for the kennels were quite out of ear-shot, on the other side of the park.

Now, strangest of all, when his nerves were

slightly unstrung by his wretched night, while walking with the Marquis upon the terrace, he had distinctly heard beneath the solid ground on which he trod the muffled but unmistakable beat of galloping hoofs. For a time he had affected not to notice it, but as the hollow sounds seemed to accompany him in his promenade they became insupportable, and he gripped his host by the arm, exclaiming, "Do you hear nothing?"

"Where, sire?" his companion asked in surprise.

"Here, under our feet. It is gone now, but is there some subterranean tunnel here through which horsemen pass?"

"No, your Majesty. It is true that in mediæval times the outbuildings of the castle extended over this portion of the grounds. That long wall of solid masonry which buttresses the terrace was the *enceinte* of the feudal fortress. But the dungeons which formerly occupied the lower story of this part of the castle have been filled in solidly with earth, with the exception of a cave used for fuel. The sounds you speak of must have been pure imagination, for there is no passage beneath us through which a horse could be ridden."

Louis was not a coward when menaced by

an enemy of flesh and blood, but he was superstitious, and this story of the phantom huntress was so thoroughly believed at Le Lude,—he had heard it repeated in a dozen varying ways by the nobles of the neighbourhood,—that he had come to credit it. If any one deserved the attention of the guardian of the house, it was surely he, for in spite of all these prognostics he had obstinately determined not to abandon the object of his visit. He had been unable to forget the Marquise, and had come to entreat her personally to return to Versailles. He had found her more bewitching than ever. He would not leave the castle without declaring his passion.

It had declared itself already in his looks and acts, and the Marquise, though a clever fencer, could not keep him always at a distance. “You must hear me,” he had told her (in a quick aside), “for I shall remain your guest until you give me an opportunity to tell you why I am here.”

Her cheek paled. Such dallying, when he was publicly expected at Tours, would set evil tongues to wagging. Were it not better to let him speak his mind once for all? Was there any more expeditious way of ridding herself of him?

So Colin, who had been assigned to their royal guest as huntsman and squire, to keep at his side during the ride through the forest lest he should lose his way in its labyrinths, to carry his pouch, and to defend him with his long knife if attacked by any ferocious animal, and who had already performed these services acceptably,—was bribed by my lady to do her a service which the Marquis of Le Lude little suspected.

He told the King of a hunting-lodge long disused, though it was not far from the château, standing at one of the entrances to the park, just where the road to Tours crossed the confines of the forest. No one approached the château by this way, for the gate was locked; but the châtelaine had the key and could easily be in waiting there, while nothing was more simple than for the King and Colin to separate themselves from the hunt for a short time and join the Marquise at this rendezvous.

As his hostess gave him his stirrup-cup, Louis made sure that she understood the appointment, and he was satisfied that she had authorised it, though her hand shook so that she spilled the spiced wine. She would have drawn back even then. "Did Colin tell you

that this lodge was the favourite resort of La Grande Chasseresse?" she asked.

"I care not if it be that of the devil," he replied recklessly, "so you meet me there."

Away the party dashed into the deep forest, the Marquis keeping at the side of the King all the afternoon. It was in vain that Colin rode on in front with a significant gesture, or lagged behind,—it was impossible for the King to shake off his assiduous companion. At last, as the sun was setting, they came upon an *étoile*, or space, where several roads met, marked by a cross. "It was here," said the Marquis, "that the sinful priest driven by La Grande Chasseresse dropped dead and was buried. I am glad that it is still daylight, for they say that on moonlight nights his hands are seen protruding from the earth, waving frantically in supplication. Hold, there is a flicker of something white at the foot of the cross now!"

Colin dashed forward and returned with a sheet of paper. "It was blowing about among the grasses though there was not a breath of wind," he said.

"There is something written upon it," said the King; "give it to me, my man." And while the Marquis struck a flint Louis read:

“Woe to the outlaw of the wood,
Fly, fly, the huntress of Le Lude!”

“She is after her game,” said Colin, with a scared face. “To-morrow we shall find a poacher lying hereabouts with a twisted neck. ’Tis well that we bade the men to meet us with the flambeaux by the lake at the other side of the forest. Ride quickly, Messieurs, before the light fades and we lose our way.”

“Go on with Colin,” said the Marquis. “I will wait here, until the others come up. They might take the wrong turning. I am not afraid of my ancestress, for my conscience is clear.”

He spoke confidently, but he was agitated none the less, and the King felt his passion cool, and his interest in the enterprise before him lose its zest. If only he knew of a straight avenue to the castle the Marquise might await him till daybreak at the lonely *rendezvous de chasse*. Colin was waiting for him at the entrance to a bridle-path a little farther down the road. “This is the way, your Majesty, to the lodge. It is only a mile farther on. You cannot miss it. I will follow you more slowly, and guard you from pursuit. You have but to ride straight ahead, for this *allée* leads to the highway to Tours; then turn to your

right, and you will see the towers in front of you, for the moon will have risen."

The King rode on in the gathering dusk quite slowly, for the path was obstructed by fallen logs and overhanging boughs.

He was picking his way carefully when suddenly a sound struck his ear which gave him a distinct shock,—the distant baying of a hound, not the yelping cry of his host's pack of *levriers*, but the deep bass of a great-throated bloodhound.

He struck spurs to his horse and dashed on, clearing obstructions, disregarding the sharp lash of twigs against his cheek or the grazing of a knee against a tree-trunk, and so, recklessly riding, came out upon a broad highway gleaming white in the moonlight, leading toward and past two round towers which loomed against the red afterglow of the sky, farther away than he had hoped. He galloped more safely now, but, hearing plainly the bell notes of the hound, turned in his saddle, and saw the huge black creature following swiftly with its nose to the ground. He had been called a fair rider, but he had never ridden as now, and he was encouraged to see that the space between him and the dog was widening, and that the wrought-iron

grille between the two towers suddenly flew open at his approach. But the next instant he drew rein so sharply that his horse nearly threw him, for within the archway of the lodge gate stood a horse and rider effectually blocking his passage and awaiting his coming in anything but a friendly attitude. Even in silhouette he recognised the mannish redingote which he had seen in the portrait, and the Rubens hat, with its sweeping plume, pulled low over a hard, square-cut face. La Grande Chasseresse rested her crossbow-pistol on the pommel of her saddle, but she lifted it now and silently aimed it at the King.

The Bien Aimé waited not to give her time to fire, but turned his horse from the gate, and fled, following the broad highway as it swept on toward Tours.

A mocking laugh sounded behind him, then the sharp rat-a-plan of a horse's hoofs striking fire from the flinty road, but Louis bent low and struck the rowels deep, distancing all pursuit, and thanking Heaven that his soldiers were not at hand to see him run from a phantom, and that phantom a woman!

The Marquis of Le Lude waited long at the lake, and, alarmed by the King's non-appearance, returned to the château, crossing the

Tours highway at a point distant from the hunting-lodge he saw the fast-diminishing figure of the King as it disappeared in the dim perspective, and wondered what traveller rode so madly into the night. As the Marquis entered the park he was startled by the apparition of the Grande Chasseresse riding leisurely up the avenue leading to the stables, and he hurried to the château, dreading he knew not what disaster.

His wife's laugh rang out as he paused before the portal. She was standing by the parapet of the highest tower.

"You saw him run, dearest?" she cried. "You must have seen him run! Was it not a capital jest?"

"A jest! I do not understand. Do you know that La Grande Chasseresse is abroad, and that the King is lost in the forest?"

"Nay, we are well rid of him. He is on his way to Tours, whence I doubt whether he will have the grace to send us his excuses for his lack of leave-taking, for Colin says that in all his life he never saw so terrified a mortal."

"Is it true, then, my darling, that you were in danger from him, and that the phantom huntress interfered in your behalf? For I

saw her with my own eyes patrolling these grounds."

"And shall see her again, *mon ami*. Colin, Colin, come and tell your master of our plot; how you beat pieces of wood together in the cellar beneath the terrace to imitate the trot of a horse; how you gave the warning which I wrote, and, outriding the King, put on the garments of La Grande Chasseresse which you had left in readiness at the lodge, and, loosing the black hound at the same time, together managed to frighten our sovereign lord the King out of his senses."

The vassal stumbled forward, much impeded by the folds, to which he was unaccustomed, and swept the Marquis a low bow with the felt hat of the huntress.

"Then the supernatural guardian of the ladies of Le Lude has not honoured you with her attention?" the Marquis asked. "Ah! I forgot. The warning which drove us from Versailles, that at least was authentic."

"*Cheri*, that was my forgery, like the rest. I wearied of the Court. I feared its influence for us both, but I saw that nothing but imminent peril to me would induce you to relinquish its attractions.

"The relation of the tradition of La

Grande Chasseresse to the King gave me my cue. It is the only deception that I have ever practised upon you. Forgive me, dearest, for—

“ ’T was love that taught me to delude
And saved the honour of Le Lude.”





CHAPTER VIII

THE MOAT WITH THE CRIMSON STAINS

'T IS a strange story which I have to tell of ten years of mingled wretchedness and rapture,—ten years spent in that old grey tower whose foundations are washed by the stream in which long sanguinary streaks gave such sinister foreboding of the mystery which was to trouble my life.

The tower was Maître Oeben's atelier in the Manufactory of the Gobelins, then occupied by a colony of artists in textiles, metals, and wood, whose chief desire was to make of their *confrèrerie* a nursery of art for the honour of the French nation.

The clustered workshops and homes were separated from the neighbouring *quartier* by a natural moat; for the Bièvre, dividing into two small arms, completely embraced the hillock on which the governmental buildings had been erected, making of the Gobelins an island.

The gardens of the artists ran down to the water's edge. There were tanneries below us which infected the Bièvre, making it a vile sewer, willing for very shame to hide its foulness in a subterranean channel, but the stream came to us fresh from the country, receiving its first stain from the dye-house of our tapestry works.

Little Victoire Oeben loved to sit in an old punt which was moored at the foot of the tower, and trail her doll in the water to see to what color its white frock would be changed. Usually it was some tint of red, for the Gobelins scarlet was famous far back in the reign of Francis I., and I remember that Madame Oeben told me that it was because François-Julienne possessed the secret of the beautiful *bleu du roi* that he was able to marry a daughter of the dyer in scarlet, and by that union add blue and purple to the Gobelins palette. "They made marriages for the sake of their art in those days," Maître Oeben commented, "and not for silly, sentimental reasons."

For like reason Maître Oeben early fixed upon me for his future son-in-law, for there was no spark of sentiment in his nature, except as it went out in a consuming passion for his handicraft as an *ébéniste*. I was twenty years

of age when I first presented myself and was accepted as Maître Oeben's apprentice,—a blue-eyed German boy, with a prettier trick of blushing, so Madame Oeben has since told me, than many a demoiselle of my years.

I had already acquired in the Netherlands considerable skill in drawing, and a precision in the use of tools which no one, not even my master himself, could rival. I never bungled or made a ragged cut. My chisel traced as clean a line, as perfect a curve, as Boucher's pencil. My hand never trembled; it was the hand of a surgeon. Maître Oeben recognised his good fortune when I presented him with my first panel of marquetry.

"Bravo, Riesener!" he said; "we shall have no wood wasted under your tools," and he raised my salary on the spot from that of an apprentice to an accredited artificer. He had need of such an assistant, for he had just entered upon the ambitious project of the King's desk. For two years I laboured with him over the problem, the designing of the most beautiful desk which could be imagined, and the constructing of a model in wax with suggestions of all its details, which should tempt Louis XV. to give Maître Oeben the commission. As I worked I became imbued

with my employer's enthusiasm. It was necessary to use a magnifying-glass in order fully to appreciate this *maquette*, for in size it was only a child's toy, but it was a marvel of exquisite workmanship.

And so at last there was joy in the house of Oeben of such transporting quality that the master embraced us all, not even forgetting smutty-faced Baptiste, with the oily rags, and in this indiscriminate expression of his rapture did not even omit his wife. For on that memorable morning Monsieur de Pommery, Garde Général des Meubles de la Couronne, called to bring the momentous news that Louis XV. had examined our model and was pleased to order its execution for his own particular use. It was Madame Oeben who first learned this news, for she had received the Superintendent of the Royal Furniture, and had surprised that pompous functionary by going into hysterics and embracing him wildly when she comprehended that the prize for which the entire household had laboured for many months was really ours. Her shrieks of delight were plainly heard in the atelier, and, Monsieur Oeben's absorption vanishing in the fear that his wife had gone crazy, he ran with all his might to his cottage, but not so rapidly but that I out-

distanced him, and would certainly have done De Pommery a mischief in my misunderstanding of the situation, had not Madame restrained my avenging hands and managed between her peals of laughter to make known the joyful intelligence. Then it was that we all caught the infection, and that Monsieur so far forgot himself as to kiss his wife, and that the entire house of Oeben was changed to a pandemonium of gladness, everybody embracing every one else.

Nay, I am wrong, for even in that moment of ecstasy I did not presume to kiss so much as the hem of Madame Oeben's gown, but, having bussed my employer and shaken De Pommery by the coat-skirts, I took little Victoire upon my shoulder and danced until I could dance no more.

It would take ten years of unremitting industry to execute the designs for the panels of marquetry which were only sketched in the tiny *maquette*.

There would be twenty-two of these designs which I must think out. Monsieur Oeben having only decided that he wished trophies of flowers and fruits, representing the riches of the earth, and groups of shells, coral, and pearl, representing the riches of the sea,

bound with fluttering ribbons in the decorative manner of Boucher; but these cartoons must be so tinted that they could be reproduced in the natural colours of the woods used. I would have the more delicate cutting to do as well, for my master's hand was not as sure as it had been, though his brain was even more active and inventive than in early life.

There were keen critics ready to fall upon the work if it were not successful, and presently I drew a long breath and ceased my dancing. Monsieur Oeben understood my sudden gravity and struck me encouragingly on the shoulder.

"I would never have undertaken this project," he said, "had I not known that you were perfectly capable of doing your part. I am ready now to draw up the formal contract, stating that if this desk achieves the triumph which I confidently anticipate, I will, at the expiration of the ten years, accept you as my partner and my son-in-law."

Madame Oeben gave a little gasp of dismay.

"Why not?" snapped her husband. "Riesener has been with us two years. Have you any fault to find with him? I am not growing any younger. I would like to have things settled and to know that he will not leave me

in the lurch when this contract is but half carried out; becoming my rival instead of my collaborator."

I swore that I could not be capable of such an action (little thinking that it was exactly what fate would drive me to do). My master sneered, "You will keep your engagements so long as it is for your interest to do so, like the rest of the world, and I intend to outbid all competitors. There is nothing like the prospect of a happy marriage to settle a young man. Tell me frankly, Riesener, are you likely to form a more advantageous connection than the one I offer?"

I was obliged to admit that it was beyond my hopes, for apart from material considerations my master's daughter was a most attractive young person,—and we had already entered upon relations of intimacy. Mademoiselle Victoire manifested her approval of me by an hundred pretty terms of endearment and affectionate caresses, and was especially fond of riding pickaback with her dainty slippered feet thrust under my arms and her small hands garroting my throat. Lest prudes should turn scandalised from this recital I hasten to explain that the young lady thus prematurely destined to be my bride was

but five years of age, and that my prospective mother-in-law was but twenty-three.

There seemed so many hazards against matters coming to this climax in the years that must intervene, that I thought myself safe in complying. Moreover, my father had bade me in choosing a wife to be guided more by the appearance of her mother than by her own girlish looks. "For," said he, "the girl will speedily outgrow her springtime beauty, and become such in character and person as she who gave her birth and training." So it was because even at that early stage of our acquaintance that Madame Oeben commanded my admiration that I entered thoughtlessly upon engagements which were to cause us all much misery. It did not come at once, for I was absorbed in my work, something of the character of which I must now explain.

Monsieur Oeben had learned the craft of an *ébéniste* from the younger Boule, and he was very ingenious in all mechanical devices, and well versed in all the traditions of the old school. Like the great cabinet-maker of the reign of Louis XIV., he could direct the fret-saw in cutting at one time an intricate pattern (where Italianate foliations blossomed into beautiful nymphs) through two superimposed

sheets of brass or silver and tortoise-shell, thus producing different inlays of the same pattern, without a crack in the delicate shell. But these mosaics of such varied materials, which included also ebony, ivory, enamel, and even mother-of-pearl, seemed to the more fastidious taste of the new school a trifle barbaric, and the vogue of the day demanded that marquetry or wood mosaic should be executed strictly in wood, thus achieving a more harmonious if a less striking result.

The palette afforded by the various woods now imported from the colonies was sufficiently full to satisfy the most exigent colourist. In ebony alone, I had at my disposition a dozen different tints, from the jetty black of Mauritius through *palisandre*, a violet, and *grenadit*, crimson, to the pinks, the greens, and the yellows, and even the white ebony of Portugal. Then there were the rich reds of the Brazil rosewoods and of the mahogany of Cayenne and Malabar; the carnations of cedar and all the exquisite blendings and cloudings of satinwood; the deep fawn-colour of musky scented sandalwood brought from China, the lighter yellows of holly, box, and olive-wood, and the greys of pear-wood. These tints could be intensified by immersing the

woods in a bath of hot sand or staining with acids.

As in materials used, so in the forms fashion had been fickle. No one cared any longer for the antiquated, pompous style of decoration so expressive of the taste of the Grand Monarque. The contours of all articles of furniture, cabinets, *escritoirs*, consoles, *tête-à-têtes*, and reclining chairs were in the rococo style affected by the Marquise de Pompadour,—so elegant and capriciously fanciful, that the pot-bellied *coffres* and bureaux of Boule seem in contrast awkward and elephantine.

Maître Oeben would flash into unreasoning anger when I explained to him the superiority of the art of the present (which, with the arrogance of youth I then supposed would remain also the art of the future).

“The age has lost all sense of dignity, of uprightness,” he would declare. “Your Madame de Pompadour is a whirlwind who has invaded art and has contorted every straight line to a spiral. Even our moral ideas have joined in the dizzying waltz: they are as much out of plumb as every line in decoration. I tremble for France unless there is a speedy return to the straight line.”

He had no reason to be discontented with

his wife, for she was devoted to him. "I am only unhappy," she confessed to me one day, "because there is no way in which I can advance my husband's career."

"Surely you make a better artist of him by keeping him a happy man," I said.

"As for that," she replied with a pout, "I help him only as a good housekeeper might, but I would like to be more to my husband than that." She should have been more, and I wondered if indeed my master knew her worth, but I could make no comment.

"He is absorbed heart and soul in his art," she continued; "he lives for it alone. If I could aid it, if I could do for him what you do, or even polish the woods like Baptiste, I would have his gratitude, but he hurries from his dinners to his work without knowing what he has eaten, and I am only the provider of his dinners. If I were a great lady, then I might help by securing him orders." The tears were in her eyes and I longed to tell her what was in my heart,—that the man who mounted by his wife's help, was a poor creature and that such love as hers should be inspiration enough to make a poor artist perform miracles; but all that I could say was that Maître Oeben's work was most absorbing and that when the

desk was finished he would have more time for his family.

I do not propose to relate thus lengthily all that happened in that decade which passed so swiftly; how Maître Oeben grew every day more tyrannical and unreasonable, and how my *fiancée* shot up into a slim girl of not quite her mother's beauty, but of a loveliness all her own. She was well aware of the family arrangement, and, to my displeasure, accepted it meekly, regarding me ever with gentle affection and treating me with confidence.

To my displeasure, I have said, for, in spite of her attractiveness, I could not love her. Madame Oeben vexed me by the persistency with which she alluded to our engagement. She insisted that I should call her *belle maman*, and she had taken to wearing caps, which she said were suitable to her age and approaching dignity. They were marvellously becoming to her, for they were mob-caps with filmy ruffles which matched those on her *fichu*, and on her apron which she wore over gowns of the shades of the wistaria that draped the front of the cottage.

Maître Oeben, too, expected me to present Victoire with a bouquet or a box of bonbons when I came to dine with them on Sundays,

and on such occasions never failed to bid his daughter offer me her cheek for the salute which I felt myself obliged to impress upon it.

I came quite to hate the gentle girl, who was always sewing for her *corbeille*, and when she let me peep into the chest and see how the pile of napery was growing I could have thrown it all with good relish into the Bièvre, for at last I understood my false position and knew, wretched man that I was! that with all my heart and soul I loved my *fiancée's* mother. From the time that this knowledge dawned upon me I avoided them both, spending my leisure time in company with some of my artist comrades, seeking any amusement rather than the companionship of the family with which I was soon to be identified.

Of all my artist friends I was fondest of two: Desiré Gouthière, commonly called Gouthière le Beau, a *ciseleur* and *doreur* of brass, who made exquisitely carved and moulded mounts for our furniture, and of a sculptor named Augustin Pajou. They were both young men of genius in their respective arts, who were to achieve fame later on, and even at that time great aims and ambitions were surging in their souls. We were three congenial spirits, and whether we discussed our

art or sang rollicking songs as we marched down the centre of the Avenue des Gobelins arm in arm, with three pretty shop-girls linked between, we were in sport and work ever the same true comrades.

If we passed the river façade of the Louvre Pajou would call upon us all to admire that wonderful frieze of Jean Goujon's, and the girls would stare open-mouthed as he cried out in ecstasy over the exquisite sculptures, declaring that France would never produce a man whose work would be worthy to be placed beside Goujon's. Little did he dream that ere he died he would be called to execute three naiads to complete Goujon's series for the Fountain of the Innocents and that only the true *illuminati* could distinguish between them.

Of Gouthière's work, after he established himself at his shop of the "Boucle d'Or" I need not to speak, for all the world knows that since that magnificent set of silver furniture was made at the Gobelins for the Galerie des Glaces at Versailles at the order of the Grand Monarque, never were such marvels of metal-work executed in France.

I have spoken of three other boon companions who frequently shared our holiday

excursions,—three little apprentices in a milliner's establishment, chattering magpies, for whom I cared little enough, God knows, but who served to distract our minds for the time being. Pajou was more nearly in love, for his piece of sauciness was a really pretty and lively young girl named Jeanne de Vaubernier. He was always begging her to serve him as model; but to this her ladyship would in no wise consent until the occurrence of certain events which I must now relate.

We were in the year 1767, and the King's desk was well advanced. I had completed the painting of all my designs, and had executed the inlay of half of them. Monsieur Oeben had occupied himself chiefly with the mechanical devices, inventing the ingenious system by which the cylinder which formed the rolling front mounted and descended at a touch of the finger. He boasted also that he intended to arrange a secret drawer so cunningly that none of us would be able to guess where it was situated.

The ormolu ornaments of the desk were to be designed by Monsieur Duplessis, who visited the atelier one morning and complained that he could find no model sufficiently graceful to

pose for the statuettes which he had planned should hold the sconces.

Suddenly he uttered an exclamation of blended surprise and admiration as Madame Oeben sprang to her favourite seat upon her husband's work-table and, half reclining upon one elbow amid his tools, looked at the sculptor mischievously.

"The very attitude!" cried Monsieur Duplessis, enraptured by the graceful contours of Madame's *svelte* figure too plainly displayed by the clinging fabric of her gown. "Pose for me, dear Madame Oeben, and with such a model I will achieve two of the most ravishing statuettes imaginable; for the second scone shall be identical with the first, the figure simply turning in the opposite direction, for nothing more admirable could be imagined."

"Do you really mean that I am beautiful enough?" Madame Oeben asked.

"Of a surety," I replied; "but that is no reason why Maître Oeben should allow you to pose for a nude statue."

"And why not, pray?" Monsieur Duplessis asked. "Beauty such as Madame's would make a worse man than I reverent, and I protest that I have ever respected my models and my own profession."

"There is no disgrace in Monsieur Duplessis's proposition," said Monsieur Oeben. "On the contrary, it is a great tribute to my wife's beauty. You have always declared, my dear, that you wished to help my work. Now that the opportunity offers, you will not, I am sure, refuse through any ridiculous prudery."

Madame Oeben hung her pretty head for shame. "Could not another model take the same pose?" she asked.

Monsieur Duplessis protested that there was no one who had such elegant proportions, and her husband coaxed her to yield. I could see that she was wavering for there were tears in her eyes as she said, "Indeed and indeed I have wanted to help, but I never thought of this."

I flushed into flame. "Are you mad, Monsieur Oeben," I cried, "to allow the nude portrait statue of your wife to be gazed upon by such a vile debauchee as our King?"

The veins in my master's temples swelled and his face grew purple. "It is not for you to tell me how to take care of my wife, or what is or what is not for her honour. I see plainly that I have kept you too long for that _____,"

He did not finish his sentence for my hands

were on his throat, and but for Monsieur Duplessis's interference, I would have killed him.

Then I left the Gobelins and my friend Pajou and Gouthière walked me up and down the *quais* that night as I told them all the story of my love and wretchedness. I made my home secretly for a time with Gouthière at the Boucle d'Or and drew designs for his work, but I went out only at night, for I learned that Maître Oeben had placed officers of the law upon my track to force me to return to finish the desk.

Pajou alone knew where I was, and he came to me one day with the news that the little milliner, Jeanne de Vaubernier, had consented at last to let him model her bust. Strange to say, it was the very proposition of Duplessis which had so outraged my feelings that had won her.

It had all come from a pique of wounded pride, for a young officer of the King's Guards, Louis Hercule Timoleon de Cossé, had lately turned her head by his attentions. Then something had come between them and she fancied that he had thought her not a good enough match for him, for Gouthière had told her of the grand château of Brissac which he

had been summoned to decorate by the Duc de Brissac, Cossé's father, and which would one day descend with the dukedom to the young man.

"I will show him," Mademoiselle de Vau-bernier had said, "that there are others who think me worthy of a far finer château than his old rookery of Brissac, and I will keep you all busy with its ornamentation."

We had laughed at her grand airs, but Pajou turned grave when he understood her persistency, and he refused to introduce her to Monsieur Duplessis or to arrange for her to pose for the statuettes for the King's desk. Whereupon she quarrelled with Pajou and presently disappeared from the milliner's establishment, leaving him no clue whereby to find her.

The circumstance made little impression upon me, for shortly after this a tragical event occurred which had the greatest influence upon my life.

It was not possible for me to live so near to my beloved without longing to see her, and I determined to gratify this desire once for all, and, bidding her farewell, to leave France forever. On the 19th of July, a date which I shall always remember, I found my way to the

Bièvre where it crawls sluggish and foul, a sewer for the offal from the tanneries below the Gobelins region. Here I found a skiff moored to a little wharf and, appropriating it, I rowed up the noisome stream until I glided into the purer neighbourhood of the tapestry manufactory. I saw no one whom I knew until I reached Maître Oeben's garden, and there, as chance or fate would have it, Madame Oeben was sitting alone in the balcony which overhung the water. She was looking intently at it, and she uttered a little cry of surprise when she saw me.

"O Monsieur Riesener," she said, "I am so glad that you have come back to us. It shows how foolish premonitions are, for I was looking at that bloody tinge and, though I knew that it was only the colouring matter from the vats, it seemed to me that it must be caused by some mangled corpse, and that if I looked intently enough I might see your ghastly face beneath the water. I have been so anxious about you. My husband will be as glad as I that you have returned, for he has asked me to write and beg you to do so. He would not believe me when I told him I did not know where you were."

I clenched my hand. "He does not believe

your word, he thinks you unfaithful,—then I will never come so long as he lives,” I said.

“Then how does it happen that you are here now?” sneered Maître Oeben himself as he came up on tiptoes to see with whom his wife was talking. ‘Go to the house, my dear; I have something to say to this young man, of whose whereabouts you knew nothing, but who has so conveniently happened along.” He laughed disagreeably and I pushed my boat a little way down the stream, for I had no mind to talk with him.

“Stop, Riesener!” he cried; “you must stop! I cannot finish the desk. I shall forfeit my engagements with the King. You are bound to keep yours. We must not let such a trifling thing as that baggage wreck so great an undertaking! I am a hasty old man. I take back all I have said. Forgive me, you must forgive me—for the sake of our desk, our beautiful desk!”

But my heart was hot, and I protested to him, as I had to his wife, that I would never cross his threshold so long as he lived. He stumbled away with a gesture of despair, and I saw him climb the exterior staircase to his atelier. It was the last time that any one saw him alive, and as I rowed down the Bièvre I

noted at several turnings the light shining from his studio window, but had no inkling that in my refusal to complete the masterpiece which he loved more than anything else on earth I had broken the old man's heart.

I left Paris early the next morning, and it was in Antwerp that I heard of the sudden death of my old master. Just when or how it happened no one knew, for he did not return to his wife on the evening of the 19th of July. She spent an anxious night and sought for him in the morning. At first she thought that he was in his atelier, for though the door was locked and no one responded to her calls, she fancied she heard him moving about within, and when absorbed in his work he had often been known to spend entire days without food, and at such times resented all intrusion. But the 20th of July passed, and when, on the morning of the twenty-first she had the door forced open, the room was found empty.

A lamp stood on his desk, where he seemed to have been writing, but no recently written papers of any kind were discoverable.

His hat was gone from its accustomed peg, but he had taken no money from his strong-box. A search was hastily instituted, and later in the day his body was found in

the Bièvre,—where the crimson streaks from the dye-house vats had tinged the waters with ill-omened stains. Farther down the old punt was drifting, and in the dead man's hand was the handle of a broken oar. It is probable that he was standing erect and sculling when the blade of the oar broke against some hidden object and, losing his balance, he was precipitated into the water. This very natural supposition was accepted finally by every one, but at first a bruise on the left temple (which was probably inflicted by his fall against the side of the boat and which rendered him unconscious) raised in the minds of some suspicions that he had received a blow from some unknown assassin.

But Maître Oeben had no enemies, or quarrel with any one but myself, and no one but his widow knew that I had been near the Gobelins for months.

She breathed no word of what would have been damaging testimony for me, and no one suspected, and I least of all, that a fear had sprung up in her heart that her husband had followed me and that I was guilty of his murder.

On hearing of my master's death I immediately returned from Antwerp, and presented

myself at his house to offer my services. I shall never forget the look of horror with which Madame Oeben regarded me, and, thinking that her trouble had temporarily bereft her of her senses, I left her and crossing to the atelier, resumed my work upon the desk where I had dropped it upon the day of the quarrel.

No one could gainsay my right to do so, for it was well known that I was not only Maître Oeben's most expert workman, but also his accepted son-in-law and partner.

But my little *fiancée* and her mother kept themselves in seclusion, and, as I was continually refused, I ceased to trouble them with my visits. It was not altogether on account of their mourning for Monsieur Oeben,—of that I was sure, for another young man came and went, and presently I heard that Mademoiselle Victoire was betrothed to him, and was to be married in a year's time. I was not broken-hearted by this flagrant rupture of our engagement, but whistled more cheerily as I put the finishing touches to the desk which was every day growing in beauty. I often wished that Maître Oeben, whose idol it was, could see it as I polished its satin surface, and the wish was especially in my heart on the day that Monsieur Duplessis brought the

gilded bronze sconces and other ornaments. They were very beautiful, and I recognised the statuettes at once as portraits of Mademoiselle de Vaubernier, who had disappeared so mysteriously. A strange thing had happened, for Monsieur Duplessis said that a certain scapegrace, Comte du Barry, had introduced the pretty model to him, and that though he would gladly have paid her well for posing, the Count had not only not haggled for her salary, but had offered him a considerable sum if he would make the statuettes perfect likenesses of the young lady.

So the wily little milliner had taken this way to bring herself to the attention of Louis XV.! And I was not surprised, after the desk was accepted by the King, to learn of the installation of a new *Maitresse en titre*, and to recognise one day in the notorious Madame du Barry the girl of my early acquaintance. I longed to tell Madame Oeben of the danger which she had escaped, for our profligate King was a *connoisseur* in female beauty, and my adored one far excelled the du Barry in attractiveness; but though a year had now passed since the death of her husband she maintained her obstinate refusal to see me. However, as the time was approaching for the

delivery of the desk to Monsieur de Pommery I saw that it was necessary, in order to receive the last payment, that I should present credentials signed by the widow of my former master that I was his accredited successor, and I sent a notary to ask for an interview for this purpose. It was granted, and in the presence of the man of law Madame Oeben sold me her rights in the business, watching me all the time with an undefinable expression. She had grown thin and pale, and I was filled with a great pity and desire to console her. It did not seem to me that Monsieur Oeben had been worthy of such grief. I felt, too, that I could wait no longer. The time had come when I must speak. So I lingered until the notary had gone, and then told her what was in my heart.

"It was Maître Oeben's promise," I pleaded, "not only that I should become proprietor in his business on the day that the desk was finally accepted, but also that that date should be my wedding day. It is impossible that you do not know how long and how patiently I have loved you. Am I not to have my reward at last?"

"Reward!" she cried; "I know that I am the wretched cause of your crime, but can you ask me to be its reward?"

In an instant I understood, and the revolt in my face convinced her of my innocence. She was on her knees before me, striving to seize my hands, protesting that she had misjudged me, and begging my forgiveness.

"Nay," I said, putting her from me gently; "since this idea has once entered your mind I will never come near you until I can prove, by such evidence as would convince a jury, that I did not commit this act." And so, wrestling myself from her grasp, I left her in a faint.

It was a hard task which I had set myself, for to take any one into my confidence was to excite suspicions, if not to incriminate myself. I must pursue the matter without legal assistance, and I had no knowledge of the methods of detectives.

I brooded over the affair day and night, and the only course to pursue seemed to me to prove that Maître Oeben had not met his death on the evening or the night of the 19th of July, the date of his disappearance and of our unfortunate encounter. His body had not been found until the twenty-first, and on the morning of the twentieth my friend Gouthière had accompanied me to Antwerp. If, therefore, Maître Oeben had been seen alive by any

person on that day it would be manifest that I could not have murdered him.

The alibi was easy to prove, but the date of the man's death was indeterminable, for Madame's vague impression that she had heard him moving about in his studio on the twentieth could not be verified.

Days dragged by, bringing no developments. The desk was accepted by the King and paid for munificently, and the praise of the *ébénistes* Oeben and Riesener was in every one's mouth. I received many orders and strove in intense occupation to find some solace for my heart-hunger. I removed my business to larger quarters at the arsenal, because I could not bear proximity to Madame Oeben and the associations of the Gobelins.

My friends Pajou and Gouthière had mounted in the world, oddly enough, on account of their acquaintance with the little milliner, for after her début as Madame du Barry she showed herself mindful of her old friends, and had Pajou model her bust and Gouthière ornament her "Pavillon" at Louveciennes with many thousands of livres' worth of exquisite metal-work. He took me to see this pavilion, a tiny château in the classic style, perched on the edge of the cliff, just

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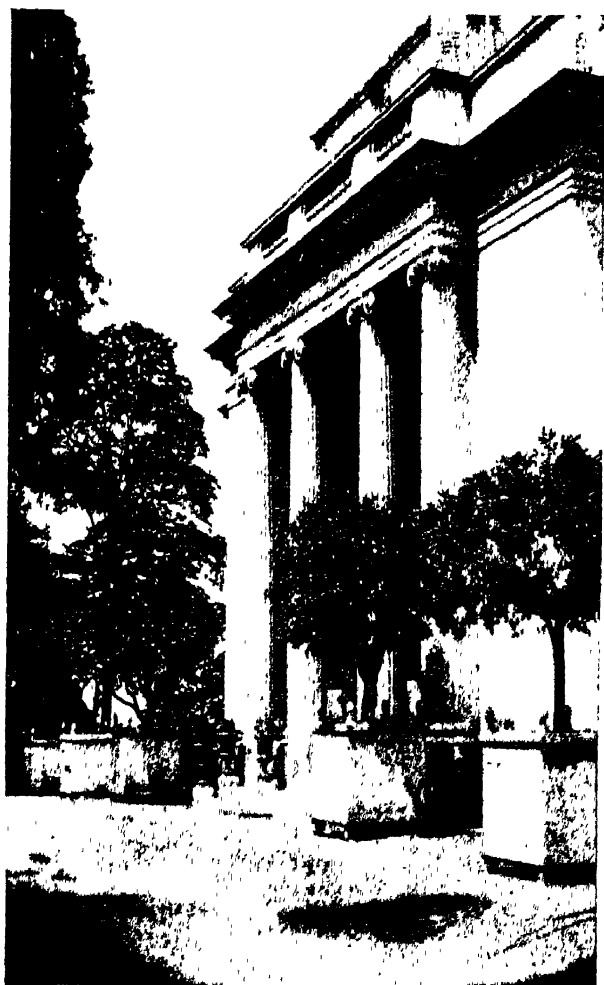
The Sculptor Pajou Modelling the Bust of
Madame Du Barry

From a painting by G. Cain

(By permission of Neurdein Frères, Paris)

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THE PAVILION OF MADAME DU BARRY
AT LOUVECIENNES.

From a photograph by J. Wells Champney.

above the Machine of Marly, and it seemed to me a perfect Greek temple transported hither by some wonder-working magician. The architect Ledoux was the magician, and Gouthière and other artists had supplemented his work well. The Seine makes a wide curve below, and a superb view is afforded of distant Paris, Versailles, and Saint Germain. I had not come simply to gratify my curiosity, for Madame du Barry had sent for me, and looked up at me with mischievous triumph when her negro page, Zamore, admitted me, for his Majesty, Louis XV., was kneeling in front of the fireplace making coffee for her while she laughed at him for scalding his fingers.

He sprang to his feet with a blush and the exclamation, "I thought Zamore, you had orders to admit no one?"

"It is only the *ébéniste* Riesener," said Madame du Barry, "whom your Majesty wished to have show you the mechanism of the secret drawer."

"Good!" the King replied. "I especially stipulated that there was to be a secret compartment in my desk, and either there is none or it is so cunningly concealed that no one can find it."

"I regret exceedingly, your Majesty," I replied, "that the mechanical part of the desk was the work of my late master, and that I have no inkling as to this special contrivance."

The desk stood before me more beautiful than ever, with its superb golden inkstand and other fittings. I searched it carefully at the King's request, but could put my hand on no concealed spring nor discover any space not frankly utilised in the known compartments.

The King, though disappointed, treated the matter as of little consequence in his easy, good-natured way; but Madame du Barry was vexed and asked how it was possible for me to have aided in the construction of the desk and yet be ignorant of this device.

I explained that my task had been the designing and construction of the marquetry, and that the planning and putting together of the interior divisions had been the last thing executed by Maître Oeben at a time when I had temporarily left him. As I walked back to Paris the idea occurred to me that possibly Maître Oeben had adjusted the spring and closed the sliding panel of the secret drawer on the last day of his life, that 20th of July, on which for me there was so much at stake. If so, the record of the day was lost with its

work, and a great despair numbed my heart as the conviction grew upon me that not until the Day of Judgment, when the secrets of all hearts must be revealed, would we know when and how death came to my master, and my innocence be established.

But there was a day of judgment coming in my own time,—the red revolution which took account of the sins of Louis XV. and visited them upon his innocent descendants. The terrible *dies iræ* did not overlook so insignificant a personage as the du Barry. She had escaped to England, but had returned to her château of Louveciennes, risking death to meet her lover, De Cossé. He was murdered and his head thrown in at her window, and later she herself was dragged to the guillotine, suffering not so much for her own sin and shame as because the French nation desired to wreak its vengeance on all who had been dear to Louis XV.

They sacked the pretty "Pavillon" and hurled its costly furniture down the cliff. The King's desk, shattered almost beyond repair, was carried to the Gobelins and presented to Madame Oeben in recognition of her husband's workmanship. On the same day a messenger brought me a letter from my beloved.

"Come quickly," it said, "for your innocence is established. My husband was living on the 20th of July."

It was a voice from the grave which told me how foolish had been my pride, how unnecessary the long waiting; for I had been cruel to my beloved as well as to myself.

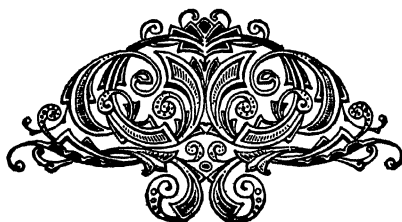
In the breaking of the desk the secret compartment had been disclosed, and in it a letter written by Maître Oeben to me and dated the 20th of July!

"I have wronged you," he wrote, "and God has punished me, for after you rowed away I returned to my atelier and completed my mechanism for the secret drawer. It is the last stroke of work which I shall ever do, for when I awoke beside my bench this morning I found my left arm paralysed. It is the beginning of the end. I know that I shall not live long, for it is the way that my father and my grandfather died. Therefore what I have to do I must do quickly, and first I must acknowledge to you and to my wife that I knew that you have never wronged me, and I beg you, Riesener, not only to carry on my work after I have gone, but to make her happy. I go now to beg your forgiveness once again, and, if I do not find you, to post this letter with my own hands, and so I leave you my blessing."

He signed the letter and dated it again with the hour of the day, "as the bells of the convent

of the Augustines are chiming for the Angelus." But for some reason he had changed his mind about posting the letter and had left it in the secret drawer. Owing, in all probability, to the partial paralysis with which he had just been stricken he had lost his balance while attempting to scull the boat, and had fallen into the Bièvre.

After all, it was not his fault so much as his misfortune that he loved his art more than aught else in life. I have reconstructed the desk; it is more beautiful than ever—and my wife and I respect his memory and pity him.





CHAPTER IX

THE FOUNTAIN OF TEARS

I

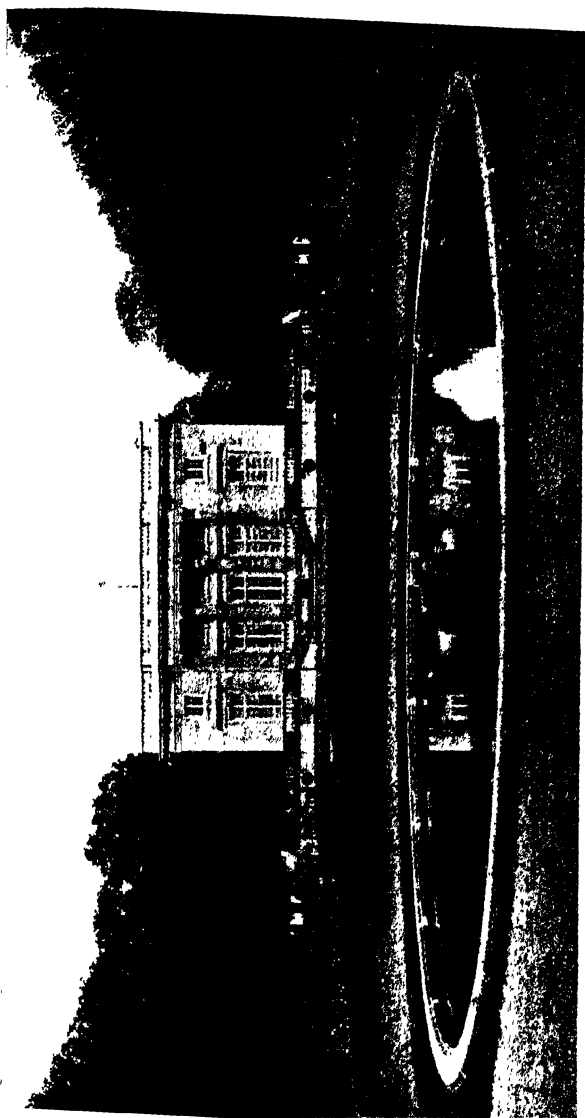
LE PETIT TRIANON

Quand le soir est tombé dans la chambre *quiète*
Mélancoliquement, seul le lustre émette
Son bruit d'incontent dans le silence clos.
Lustre toujours vibrant comme un arbre d'échos,
Lustre aux calices fins en verre de Venise
Où la douleur de la poussière s'éternise,

.
C'est un grand reliquaire à l'aspect végétal
Où d'invisibles pleurs, captifs dans le cristal,
Roulent en sons mouillés parmi les pendeloques,
Lustre, fontaine blanche aux givres équivoques;
Lustre, jet d'eau gelé, mais où l'eau souffre encor
Ce lustre, c'est mon cœur visible en ce décor,
Qui frissonne en sourdine et sans cesse s'afflige,
Jet d'eau fleurdelisé dont la plainte se fige!

GEORGES ROSENBAUM.

A LIGHT breeze had sprung up, rippling the water in the fountain basin, and sending the fallen leaves scuttling in playful somersaults like troops of little acrobats along



PALACE OF THE PETIT TRIANON.
By permission of Neurdein Frères.

the green sward. It entered the Petit Trianon with us, and wandered through the quiet rooms more like an unseen presence than an ordinary current of air, fluttering the draperies as though a feminine hand were readjusting them, rushing up the chimney like the relighting of hospitable fires on the long cold hearth-stone; touching our foreheads with the cool caress of phantom fingers and then suddenly retiring, leaving the tiny palace doubly silent and lonely. But after every other trace of the passage of this mysterious wind had died away the crystal lustre (which had first of all greeted its entrance by chiming joyously, as when the *cliquatis* of glasses at a banquet respond to the call of the toast-master) still shivered, emitting an eerie dissonance which set the nerves on edge. The wailing sound, faint and far away as though drifting through the corridors of years, produced the impression of a cry wrung from a soul in anguish. We looked into each other's startled faces and then at the exquisite chandelier, which quivered and pained the ear with its plaint, felt rather than heard, and our guide replied to our unspoken question:

"It is only the *grincement* of the pendants upon their metal links. It is said that they

made the same discords when the lustre was first hung. Then they seemed a prophecy; now they are souvenirs. Versailles is full of great Louis Quatorze and Louis Quinze lustres, as heavy and dull as overladen plum trees, and no more worthy of being compared with the *svelte* lines of that creation of genius than women in hoop-skirts with the adorable statues in the garden. Trouble yourself also to remark the purity of the crystal. The pendants are facettèd like diamonds, and when the sunshine or the candle-light strikes them they are shot through with every colour of the prism. But if I close the shutters,—so,—they are as transparent as icicles formed from the most limpid water, as colourless and formless as air itself, and you can only find them with your fingers. But even when the lustre is invisible we know that it is still there from that wailing cry.”

Our guide, though he wore the cocked hat and regulation uniform of the guardians of Versailles, had a soul above his livery. He had lived so long in the palace that every portrait and every object of furniture had for him a significance historical or legendary. And he had been detailed by the director of the museum as the man who could best bring

his auditors *en rapport* with the localities which he showed them.

We admired the exquisite craftsmanship and faultless taste displayed in the lustre, as in all the decorative art of the Louis Seize period, and remarked that the shape of the pendants supplemented the plaintive sounds by suggesting to the eye the eternal drip of tears.

"Oddly enough," replied our guide, "the lustre was long ago named The Fountain of Tears, not, as one might suppose, by a poet, but by the mad mob who surged through the palace to pillage and to destroy. A wretch strove in vain to wrench it from its place, and, as a shower of the crystal drops fell upon the floor, a woman of the people shrieked, 'They are the tears of Marie Antoinette. She is weeping for her friend, the Princesse de Lamballe.' The similitude was easy enough to trace at that time if there had been no omen connected with the lustre, for the unhappy queen was even then weeping in her prison of the Temple, but there was a story, well known to the domestics of the household, that the lustre had been regarded as vaguely foreshadowing evil from the day that it was first hung."

That was in the spring of 1774, when the death of Louis XV. made Louis XVI. master and King. One of his first acts was to say to his wife, "Madame, you are fond of flowers, I beg you to accept the bouquet which I offer you Le Grand et Le Petit Trianon. These little châteaux have always been the residences of the favourites of the King, consequently they belong by right to you."

"Louis well knew that he was giving the Queen her heart's desire. Any one who knows our great palace of Versailles understands that the kings and queens who lived there possessed not one moment of perfect privacy. Every act, no matter if it were so trivial as dressing and undressing, or so sacred as birth or death, was a matter of court ceremonial or a public spectacle. So, when Marie Antoinette received the gift of the Trianons she fancied that she could lead a double life. At Versailles and Fontainebleau and the other royal palaces her great *lit de parade* would still be a throne, where even at her *petit lever* she must receive certain of the nobility, but here she could live her own life without any of the etiquette against which her soul revolted.

"At the larger of the two Trianon châteaux she would entertain her intimate friends, with

no reference to the rank which gave the *entrée* to court functions.

“There were two friends who were frequently admitted even here—the Princesse de Lamballe and the King’s younger brother, the Comte d’Artois. The tradition of the lustre touches them, for it is said that on the first evening that the King and Queen occupied the Petit Trianon the harp of the Princess was placed directly beneath the chandelier, and she complained that she was distracted by confused vibrations which echoed within the lustre like the humming of innumerable bees. The Comte d’Artois took her place and sang a selection from Gluck’s *Iphigénie*.

Hold! you are right,’ he said; ‘it is as though a chorus of elfin voices were repeating the theme. Can you not hear them shrilling

“*Avec noirs pressentiments,*

Noirs pressentiments, mon âme intimidée” ’?

“The Queen placed herself quickly at his side. ‘I hear nothing,’ she said at first, then, as the Princesse de Lamballe struck her harp-strings,—‘Yes, there was a faint sigh. The lustre has a soul; do not make it grieve, dear friend. Does not its very appearance remind you of falling tears?’

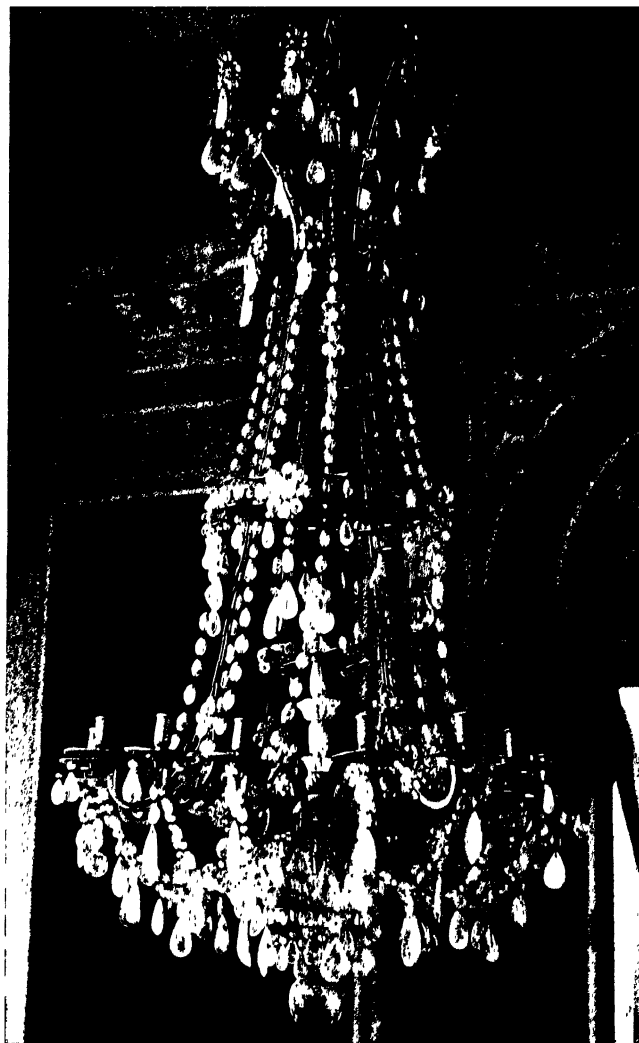
“‘No, dearest,’ the King replied, ‘of frozen tears held in suspension. It is a good omen, for it signifies that no tears of yours shall fall until these crystal bubbles break upon the pavement.’

“‘An omen!’ the Queen exclaimed; ‘then let us be sure that the chain is very strong.’

“‘It will outlast all our lives,’ said the Comte d’Artois, springing upon a chair and setting all the pendeloques tinkling as he tried the strength of the fastenings. ‘It is no more likely to release its drops than any one of us to cause you to weep. Love has been likened many times to fire,—it remains for us to invent a new metaphor. Love is a friendly frost which congeals all tears.’

“That is all the legend, Madame, brief and sufficiently apparent,—after the fact,—for it was not until the Queen heard of the death of her friend that her tears fell.”

In this little prelude of our imaginative guide the lustre played the dominant theme of the symphony of the Trianons—a tragedy with an idyllic *mise en scène* no less fateful than beautiful, intoxicating the senses and paining the heart with the pathos of its associations. No spot in the world awakes such contrasting sensations: the most unsenti-



LUSTRE OF MARIE ANTOINETTE AT THE PETIT TRIANON.

By permission of Giraudon.

mental feel its influence and wander dreamily, absorbed by suggestions evoked by every object.

They flit ghost-like before us in the shadows which the afternoon sun throws upon the narrow *allées* and the verdant lawns, and oppress us with a sense of intrusion as we approach the Temple of Love, surrounded by its frail colonnade. We are trespassers as we wander down the "forgotten Path" to the little stream where the black and white swans glide silently or drowse with necks curved beneath their wings.

Here, in contrast to the ostentatious pomp of the magnificent distances of Le Nôtre's royal garden, where the Pompadour and the du Barry were cringed to by nobles in brocade and lace, the sunlight steals through the natural wood and glints the mossy, thatched roofs of the tiny *hameau*, touching softly the ruinous walls of the Queen's Dairy, the Mill, and the humble Maison du Seigneur.

The little Eden did not evolve itself by chance, nor in a day. For three years Marie Antoinette occupied herself with it, assisted by experts and artists. The Duc de Caraman (an amateur landscape gardener enamoured with the new, so-called English style, which

had already found expression at Ermenonville and elsewhere in France), the architect Mique, and, above all, the artist Hubert Robert, who designed the Baths of Apollo in the gardens of Versailles and whose exquisite drawings of poetic landscapes, with classical details, can be seen scattered through the Louvre, all gave their best thought to the elaboration of the Queen's desire. No more formality of never-ending vistas, of rigid straight lines, of clipped trees, colossal statuary, and spectacular fountains.

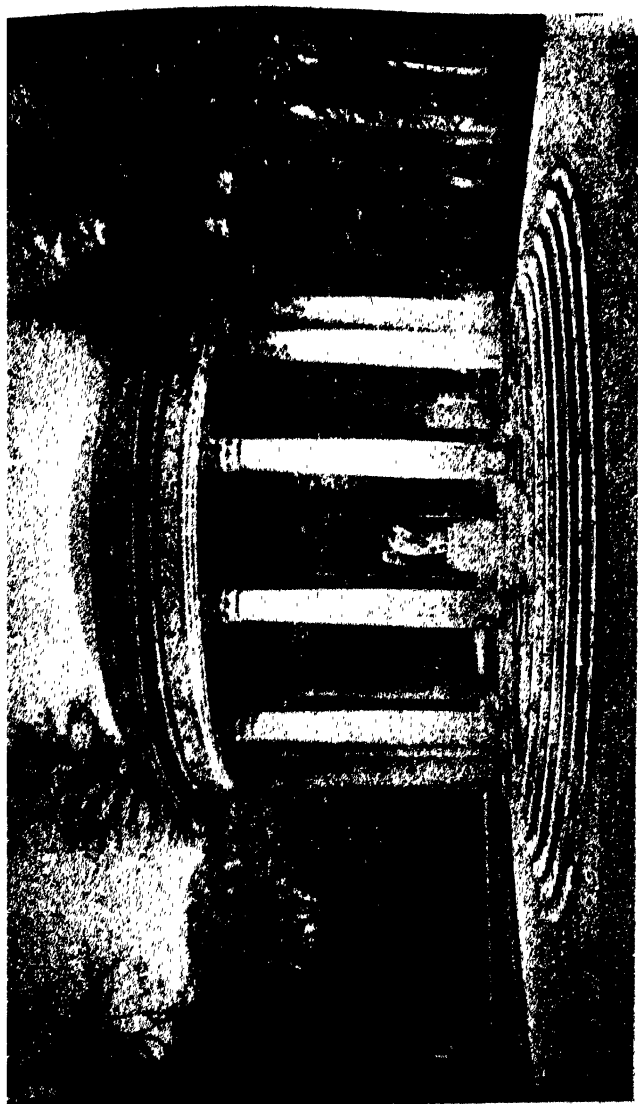
Trees and brooks, rocks, shrubs, and flowers should be free as nature itself, and all architectural adjuncts graceful, coquettish, and petite. *Rochers* were piled in picturesque disorder. The tiny stream wound gracefully through its daisy-starred meadow, crossed by rustic bridges, turning in its passage the brown wheel of the mill, so carefully posed in the most alluring situation for the water-colourist. The habitations of the mock village were quaint and apparently dilapidated from the first, with cracks painted on the stones and scars of fallen plaster showing the brickwork in the hut which the King was to call his residence. Each friend was to have her thatched-roofed *chaumière*, but must dress in the

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The Temple of Love in the Gardens of the
Petit Trianon

(By permission of Neurdein Frères, Paris)

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BATHS OF APOLLO AT VERSAILLES.
Designed by Hubert Robert, Naturalistic Method.
By permission of Neurdein Frères.

peasant costumes invented by Watteau for the opera. This child's-play and rural stage-setting was only a part of the scheme. The classical note struck by the dainty palace itself was recalled in Mique's exquisite Temple of Love, a fitting shrine for Bouchardon's *Cupid*. The Salle de Comédie and the Music Pavilion, where Gluck, who had been the Queen's master in Vienna, played upon her harpsichord, were both in the pseudo-Greek style of the Petit Trianon, which Marie Antoinette had no desire to change.

But unprincipled schemers were inciting restless spirits, and Trianon, which the young Queen had hailed as a refuge, was to be her crowning crime, the pretext for destruction with all who were excluded from its pleasures.

Chief among these was the Duc d'Orléans. He was the near relative of the King (the son of Henriette de Bourbon-Conti and the Duke of Orléans of the previous reign), and, having married the daughter of the Duc de Penthièvre, was brother-in-law of the Princesse de Lamballe. None the less, long before he took his open stand as Philippe Égalité he was for both Marie Antoinette and Madame de Lamballe a perfidious friend and a masked

enemy. Doubtless the Queen was impolitic in taking no pains to conceal her contempt of the Duke. When, as much to curry favour with the democratic party as to increase his income, he converted his ancestral palace, the Palais Cardinal of Richelieu and Palais Royal of Louis XIV., into a popular bazar of trinkets and circle of restaurants and revolutionary clubs, all of his class felt themselves insulted and menaced.

Marie Antoinette gave voice to the general indignation when, with a reckless disregard of consequences, she remarked scornfully to the Duc d'Orléans, "We can only expect to see you at Versailles on Sundays, now that you have turned shopkeeper!" She was to find that he had turned printer as well, for the Duke's hired pamphleteers wrote lampoons and libels which were sold in the arcades of the Palais Royal, magnifying the cost of Trianon to that of Marly, and describing its innocent village festivals as orgies of license. This was after the ignominious failure of the Duc d'Orléans to gain the *entrée* of these *fêtes*, a failure which not without reason he attributed in part to his sister-in-law, for the Princesse de Lamballe had deeper cause than the Queen for distrusting him. In the Prin-

cess, Marie Antoinette found that rarest of all treasures, a faithful friend.

She possessed the serenity with which an unselfish nature hides its own suffering, and the perfect manner of the *grande dame*, who abhors any ostentation of heroism as theatrical, but performs heroic deeds quietly and instinctively as though they were the ordinary courtesies of life.

Marie Therese Louise de Savoie Carignan was herself a Bourbon of the house of Savoy, and became doubly so by her marriage with Louis Alexandre Joseph Stanislas de Bourbon Lamballe, the unworthy son of the good Duc de Penthièvre, who was the grandson of Louis XIV. and Madame de Montespan. Louis XV. said of the Duc de Penthièvre, "*Voilà le plus honnête homme de mon royaume, et le plus malheureux des pères.*"

His son was one of those fascinating roués of the eighteenth century who broke the hearts of all who loved them by devoting themselves to the devil.

He and his sister's husband, the Duc d'Orléans, were boon companions in every kind of wild and shameful dissipation and the Princesse de Lamballe looked upon the Duc d'Orléans with horror, knowing that he had been

her husband's evil angel, inciting him to orgies which the Duc d'Orléans shared with more moderation. The wronged wife could not endure the presence of the Duke, but bore everything from her husband, even to the robbery of her jewels, which he bestowed upon an actress. She nursed him tenderly in his last illness, and retired with his father to mourn his death in the château of Rambouillet, finding in her father-in-law the truest of friends as well as a powerful protector. The Duc de Penthièvre was one of the richest nobles in France. Grand Amiral and Grand Veneur; his income amounted to more than three million francs, and he possessed various duchies, principalities, baronies, and other dignities, with the great châteaux of Sceaux, Anet, Eu, Amboise, Rambouillet, the Hôtel de Toulouse in Paris, and many lesser estates. Of all these his favourite residence and that of the Princesse de Lamballe was Rambouillet. It is still filled with her souvenirs, and no more fitting background for her portrait could be imagined.

Here for seven years the Princesse de Lamballe indulged her fondness for seclusion, appearing at Court only when some great function, like the marriage *fêtes* of Marie Antoinette, imperatively demanded her presence.



LA PRINCESSE DE LAMBALLE
By permission of Neurdein Frères.

It was at her wedding festival that the Dauphine first saw the Princess and fell in love with her at first sight; but it was not until after the death of Louis XV. that Marie Antoinette was able to persuade her to reside at Versailles.

The young Queen revived in favour of her friend the old office of Surintendante de la Maison de la Reine, abolished by Marie Leczinska, on account of its expense. France was quick to note this thoughtless generosity, but, all unconscious of the volcano on whose crest she was treading, Marie Antoinette gave her merry *fêtes* at Trianon, one of which simulating a country fair, stands as a type of these ill-timed gaieties.

The little hamlet was occupied by the Court ladies, who ran up and down the rustic exterior staircases or tripped across the greensward in their shepherdess costumes. The Princesse de Lamballe appeared as a dairy-maid, with pail poised coquettishly upon her rose-garlanded coiffure, and a milking-stool tucked under her arm.

The booths for the fair had been arranged in the meadow: Madame Elizabeth, representing a *charcutière*, gave away meat-pies to the genuine peasants who were admitted to

the grounds, while she decorated the cour-tiers with necklaces of linked sausages. The Comtesse de Polastron sold tobacco for a well-turned compliment, and a duchess told fortunes, costumed as a strolling gipsy. The fascinating Marquise de Fontenay had charge of the lottery, obliging prince and peasant alike to carry away their prizes of live ducks and pigs.

The crowd around the wheel of fortune grew more and more dense, for the young *divorcée* was the belle of the Court. The daughter of the Spanish Ambassador, Count Cabarrus, her Castilian beauty was then everywhere victorious, and her spirit and courage were to make her a little later one of the most conspicuous women of the century.

"We are all ready to accept our fate from your hands," said the Princesse de Monaco, as she presented her lottery ticket.

"You may trust it to me, Princess," said the Marquise de Fontenay. "I decree to you a dove. May its wings bear you to the nest you love!"

Her words were remembered when many in that little company met under more fateful circumstances and owed their deliverance to the intrepidity of their friend. There were

those present to whom she could not give the wings of a dove, among others, the poet André Chénier, who possessed a soul as sensitive as that of Keats, whose poem on Versailles had given fame beyond the vogue of the hour. He figured now at the *fête* as a letter-writer, and, as the false peasants pretended they could not write, he improvised love sonnets for them to give their sweethearts. As the Queen entered the grounds the courtiers sprang forward, forming an archway for her progress with their unsheathed rapiers. The last in line, the Comte de Fersen, finding himself without a *vis-à-vis*, called to the poet Chénier, who, unprovided with a sword, crossed his quill with the blade of his partner. To him it was a symbolic act, the consecration of his pen to the service of the Queen,—a service for which he laid down his life.

The Queen's arrival was the signal that the *fête* was opened. She took her seat behind the counter of a rustic cake-shop, and served all comers with dainties and with beverages to their taste in which to drink her health. The King appeared dressed as a hunter, and announced that the sports would now begin.

A band of strolling players stepped upon

the out-of-door stage and imitated the clumsy performances of rural actors. Through their peasant disguises the flutist was recognised as the Duc de Guines and the fiddler as the Comte de Polastron, but all were for a time intrigued by the tight-rope dancer who ended the spectacle by pirouetting so skilfully that the ladies gasped and closed their eyes during his more daring exploits, and the men applauded loudly, exclaiming that the king of the saw-dust arena, *Petit Diable*, had found his rival.

Suddenly the Queen tossed the acrobat a flower and the King shouted "Bravo, Charles!" for they recognised the Comte d'Artois.

Then the mysterious conduct of the Count for some time past was explained. Every morning he had refused himself to his friends, and had devoted himself to some unknown occupation,—he had been taking lessons in tight-rope dancing of *Petit Diable* until he equalled that nimble-heeled mountebank.

"The Comte is clever," whispered a satirical old noble; "he has a talent for doing every sort of useless thing, it is a trait of the Bourbons; but since Louis XIV. not one of them has known how to reign."

The success of the Comte d'Artois was so

brilliant that the Duc d'Orléans decided to emulate him and by a similar expedient gain admission to the paradise to which he had been denied admission.

His device was not, however, a happy one. Disguised as a dancing bear he intruded upon a party composed only of ladies, and having amused them for a time by well-imitated brutish gambols he carried the sport too far by pretending to escape from his keeper's control and chasing the frightened women about the grounds until the Princesse de Lamballe fainted with terror. She was not placated on her recovery to find the Duke with his disguise half torn off, laughing uproariously. The guards ejected him, and when, on the following day, he sent the Princess a note of humble apology accompanied by a bouquet of roses, both were returned to him.

This trifling occurrence was only a straw indicating the current of the feud that deepened as time went on. The Duc d'Orléans was keen enough to see that France was ripe for revolution. Not Louis XVI. alone, but all the descendants of Louis XV. as well, were to pay the penalty of that monarch's sins. But the Duke reasoned that the idea of monarchy was too deeply rooted in the French

mind to be eradicated, and if the direct line were deposed the loyalty of the people would call for a king of the collateral line of Orléans, descended, as incontestably as these degenerates who had disgraced their race, from the people's hero, Henri of Navarre.

So he laid his plots, subtly professing himself the advocate of the people's rights, the sympathiser in their wrongs, and waiting for the call to the throne.

The taking of the Bastille, July, 1789, was the first tremendous thunderbolt which ushered in the storm that had been so long gathering.

From that moment the far-seeing, the cowardly and the mercenary among the courtiers who had thronged Versailles ran like sheep for shelter. Among the first the Comte and Comtesse d'Artois left for Turin, announcing that they would return the following spring. They were not believed, for their château of Bagatelle was for sale. The Quartier St. Germain was lined with closed shutters bearing the placard "*à louer.*" To Italy, to Switzerland, to Germany, to England, the emigration took its way. The municipality gave two hundred passports a day. "So much the better," the Queen said proudly; "now we shall know our friends."

The Duke and the Duchess of Polignac asked and received permission to retire to England. One by one even the privileged *habitués* of the Trianon deserted, and at last there came a day (the 5th of October, 1789) when Marie Antoinette, sitting beneath the lustre of tears, her heart heavy with sad forebodings, was startled by a messenger who burst in upon her with the news that the women of Paris were marching upon Versailles to demand the "Baker and the Baker's wife."

"Then my place is at the side of the King," she said, and hastened to the palace, never again to see her beloved Trianon.

The evil time, foretold by the mysterious voices in the crystal chandelier, had come,—the time for tears to fall.

II

SHOWING HOW THE DUC D'ORLÉANS OFFERED THE PRINCESS A ROSE, AND HOW IT WAS FIRST SCORND AND AFTERWARD ACCEPTED

GREAT tragedies develop great heroisms, and Marie Antoinette was to have the satisfaction of knowing that certain of her Trianon friends were capable of sublime devotion.

The Duc de Penthièvre was ill in his château

of Eu, waited on assiduously by his daughter-in-law, but he had also the care and love of his own daughter, the Duchesse d'Orléans, who had sought refuge with her father from a married life which had become intolerable. The Princesse de Lamballe no longer felt herself necessary to the "good papa" whom she so dearly loved. The Queen, in her deep distress, needed her sorely, and when on the seventh of October a courier brought to the château of Eu the news of the removal of the royal family to the Tuileries, Madame Lamballe set out at once for Paris.

It was one of the few flashes of sunlight in that "darkness which could be felt," which now settled about the two women.

The Princesse de Lamballe took up her residence in an apartment assigned to her in the Pavillon de Flore, resuming her duties of Lady of the Palace, holding receptions in the Queen's place, providing games, music, dressing fashionably, conversing lightly, while her heart was freezing with fear of the people, who howled and shook their fists at her when she appeared in the street.

Once a ballad-singer threw into her coach an obscene song, defaming the Queen. It was dedicated, by permission, to the Duke of

Orléans, "The only good aristocrat," and she knew that her brother-in-law was capable of any villainy.

He had the effrontery to present himself at the Tuileries. The royal family were at dinner, but the King kindly ordered him to be shown in. Marie Antoinette gave him no salutation, and when he offered flowers to the Princesse de Lamballe, she turned her back upon him. Others of the courtiers insulted him more grossly. Some cried, "Cover the dishes or he will poison us all!" As he descended the staircase, raging at the indignity, some of the younger courtiers followed, hurling invectives and even spitting upon him. A friend of his, Maximilien de Robespierre, who was beginning to acquire influence in the Jacobin Club, was waiting for him in the court, and drawing the arm of the furious man within his own he strove to calm him.

"I do not care for the others," the Duke said in a voice choked with passion, "but she has twice scorned my roses and my friendship. Since she prefers my hatred she shall have it."

"The Princess shall ask your pardon for this insult," the Duke's companion said soothingly. "I will see that she politely accepts

the next flowers you send her." And Robespierre kept his word.

The maelstrom of fate whirled swiftly now, dragging its victims to their doom. As the situation grew more desperate the friends of the royal family advised them to flee the country. For a time Louis fatuously refused, but there came a day, when, panic-stricken, he made secret preparations for the fiasco of the flight to Varennes. Even the Princesse de Lamballe was given no inkling of the design; but Marie Antoinette was not so ungrateful as to leave her friend without an opportunity of escape, and the stratagem which she elaborated for her was more successful than her own.

The Princess owned a suburban house at Passy which she had not occupied for a long time, and was desirous of selling. The Queen advised her first to visit and put it in order, and when Madame de Lamballe acquiesced she kissed her with a suppressed emotion which seemed uncalled for by so brief an absence as was intended.

The Princess was accompanied by her two ladies-in-waiting, Mesdames Ginestous and de Lage, with their husbands as outriders.

At the city gates the coach was stopped and its destination demanded, and later inquiries

were made of the *concièrge* at Passy; but the authorities, learning that the Princesse de Lamballe had made arrangements for a stay of several days by ordering provisions and fodder for her horses, were convinced that the statement which she had made was correct. But in the dead of night a cautious ring wakened the *concièrge*.

"Who is it that disturbs us at such an impossible hour?" the servitor grumbled.

The horseman glanced about him suspiciously, but no one stirred in the moonlit street. "A letter from the Queen," he said in a low voice. "Give it to your mistress at once," and when the sleepy *concièrge* looked again the messenger was riding swiftly away.

Then for the first time Madame de Lamballe knew that the royal family were about to attempt to pass the northern frontier, and that the Queen desired her to take another route and meet her in Brussels, where in a few days they would be together again, and safe. The coachman harnessed silently, and in the grey of the early morning twilight, before the inhabitants of Passy were astir, the Princess and her four companions were rolling swiftly westward.

For two days smoke rose tranquilly from

the chimneys of the villa, white curtains fluttered from the windows, the maids sang at their work, the *concièrge* ordered fresh vegetables and fruit sent every day, neighbouring *grandes dames* left their cards and no one suspected that the Princess was not in her little château. When at last requisition was made for her it was too late, and she had escaped.

The Duc de Penthievre and his daughter were at Aumale in Normandy, and the coachman so pressed the horses that the fugitives arrived the next night. The Duke's faithful steward, Fontaire, tells of their hasty call,—only long enough to change horses; for they had not dared to do so *en route*. He wondered what serious matter was on foot, for the Duchess of Orléans was in tears, the Duc de Penthievre was writing hastily, and Madame de Lamballe, her watch in hand, pale but resolute, hurried her ladies at their luncheon, begging them to "take larger mouthfuls."

They were off again in scarcely an hour's time. "To the Château d'Eu," the Princess had said loudly to the coachman on leaving; but Fontaire had his doubts, and, following them out of town, saw the coach take the road to Abbeville.

"They are going to England," he said to

himself; "their secret is safe with me, and it will not be long before we, too, will emigrate."

But Fontaire was partly at fault. The Duc de Penthièvre did not leave France. "I have done wrong to no one," he said, "and surely they will let an old man die in his home."

As former Admiral of France he had been able to give his daughter-in-law a letter to the Lieutenant of the Admiralty at Boulogne, who secured passage for her party on an English vessel just setting sail for Dover. Here she immediately re-embarked for Ostend, and thence came safely to Brussels, where she was met by the Comte de Fersen, who told her of the arrest of the King and Queen at Varennes.

The Comte brought her a message from the Queen, begging her to wait at Spa for further developments, and here she established herself and her two ladies, taking a small but comfortable house under the name of the Comtesse d'Amboise. Spa was full of French refugees, and her *incognito* was soon disclosed. The King of Sweden was "taking the waters," and the Princess met him on several occasions.

It was reported in Paris that she had been sent to Spa on diplomatic business by Louis, and it is not impossible that she may have

aided in the transmission of letters, for the Countess de Lage tells us that she was in correspondence with the Queen, who sent her a ring set with a turquoise. The gem formed the door of a tiny reliquary containing a love-knot made of the Queen's hair, which, since Madame de Lamballe left, *had turned completely white*. She wore the ring constantly thereafter, and wrote to the Queen, begging permission to return to her. At last her request was granted. Louis had accepted the Constitution; he believed that with that concession all personal danger had disappeared, and he wrote to the Princess in October that the Queen desired her presence.

"If the Queen wishes me, that is enough," she said to her ladies, and she returned at once, but, contrary to their pleadings, alone. Fully aware that she was going to her death, she would not permit her friends to accompany her. With her anxieties locked in her own heart she took her old position of Superintendent of the Queen's Household, apparently unsuspecting of any danger. She stood with quiet dignity behind the chair of Marie Antoinette when the mob invaded the Tuileries, and in the terrible days which followed sustained the Queen. At first she had been

allowed to share the imprisonment of the royal family in the Temple; but, with the devoted Madame and Mademoiselle de Tourzel, she was soon torn from them and confined in the prison of La Force. The parting was more than the Princesse de Lamballe could endure and she was carried away fainting, and on the 3rd of September the name of the Citoyenne Marie Therèse de Bourbon Lamballe was called, and the mob waiting outside the prison, to whom the news was repeated, howled at the hated word, *Bourbon*. Her examination before the tribunal in the *conciergerie* of the prison was very brief. Having replied that she knew nothing of the plots of which she was accused, she was ordered to swear hatred to the King and Queen.

"I cannot," she replied. "I have no hatred for any one in my heart."

"Do you not know," she was asked, "that unless you obey you condemn yourself, and that the penalty is death?"

"We must all die," she answered. "A little sooner or a little later, what does it matter, if we do not fail in duty?"

There was a short consultation and the President gave the order, "*Elargissez Madame.*"

It was her death-sentence in the guise of acquittal, for when the tribunal desired the execution of a prisoner whom they hesitated to place themselves on record as condemning, they gave the command to *elargir*, or set at liberty, their victim. There was, however, a distinct understanding between them and the bloodthirsty mob without, that only when the guards shouted "*Vive la nation!*" was the miserable creature delivered to their power to be allowed to pass freely.

The Princesse de Lamballe was thrust out in ominous silence! She faced a terrible spectacle. Near the door corpses lay here and there in bloody pools. Beyond, a compact mass of the most brutal and abandoned creatures blocked the street. Brandishing weapons and glaring upon her like wild beasts, they greeted her appearance with horrible yells. As she hesitated, looking vainly for a compassionate face, two wretches, with clothing and naked arms stained with blood, pinioned her and compelled her to walk forward. For an instant the crowd was silent. A man with a musket, endeavouring to lift off her hat, wounded her forehead with his bayonet. Maddened by the sight of blood the mob sprang upon her, throwing her upon the

heap of corpses, trampling her, tearing off her clothing, and mutilating her beautiful body in the most atrocious manner. Her heart was eaten, and her head, severed from its slender, column-like throat ("the hind's neck" as Carlyle called it), was carried to the nearest *coiffeur's*, where her hair, which she had worn simply in prison, was curled, puffed, and powdered as for a Court ceremonial. The ghastly face was rouged and patched, the eyelids forced open, and the lips rudely parted in a travesty of a smile. Then it was mounted upon a pike and carried to a cabaret, where the murderers drank to it. Suddenly the cry was taken up, "To the Temple! to make Marie Antoinette kiss her friend. To the Temple, to the Temple!"

The head was borne in advance, and after it came a group of furies, dragging by the heels the naked, mutilated body. The procession swelled as it marched on,—terrible women dancing and singing the *Carmagnole*.

And yet those who followed in that awful funeral convoy were not all furies. There were three men who had witnessed the tragedy with blanched faces, powerless to save her, though they would gladly have done so.

The aged Duc de Penthièvre, hearing of the

troubles at Paris, had removed to his château of Bizy at Vernon to be near his daughter-in-law, but had succumbed to a shock of paralysis on hearing of her imprisonment. He could only send his faithful steward to Paris, with unlimited funds at his disposal, and the injunction to do everything in human possibility to save the Princesse de Lamballe.

Having to no result exhausted all the resources of bribery, the Duke's agent engaged three men, on whom he could rely, to disguise themselves as Republican workmen and station themselves at the door of La Force, to snatch the Princess away on her appearance, and convey her to a neighbouring house where he, too well known to mingle with the mob, was in waiting.

They had done their best, but were overpowered by the tremendous force of that human tidal-wave, which separated them, hurled them to the ground, and broke upon its victim. Their resistance had been attributed to a savage desire to participate in the murder of the innocent woman for a share in whose assassination the mob struggled and fought among themselves like wild beasts.

They followed now, defeated and disheartened, but doggedly determined to secure the

remains of the Princess when the awful orgy should be ended.

Of the next scene in the tragedy we have the authentic account of an eye-witness, an unknown officer on duty at the Temple.

"What Passed at the Temple, September 3, 1792:"

"Early that day, being apprised that the mob was approaching with the design of forcing the Queen to kiss the head of the *Princesse de Lamballe*, I wrote at once to the President of the Corps Législatif of our danger, and to the General of the Commune, begging for reinforcements to defend the Temple. At the same time I sent two *commissaires* to meet the mob, to fraternise with them, and, above all, to seize the head and lead them in another direction. This they were unable to accomplish. A sullen roar was soon heard, and presently an immense crowd appeared before the Temple.

"Our reinforcements had not arrived, and we threw open the outer gates to show our pacific intentions, simply stretching a tricoloured sash across the opening. I mounted on a chair behind this frail barrier and the bloody cohort halted before the symbol of the Republic. Two men, dragging by the legs a naked, headless corpse, deposited it at my feet. At my right, at the end of a pike, was a head whose

¹ This MS., entitled "What Passed," etc., was discovered in the library at Malmaison, and is incorporated at length in M. Georges Bertin's *Life of the Princesse de Lamballe*. It is given here with no change other than that of condensation.

tresses frequently touched my face in the gesticulations of its bearer. At my left a great charcoal-vendor held suspended from another pike, as a rallying flag, a bloody garment.

"I asked their wishes, and the mob demanded to be admitted to the prison to carry the head to the cell of Marie Antoinette, or at least to the court of the Temple; and that the Queen should be compelled to show herself at the window. I extended my arm, imploring silence, which was granted, and I harangued them for a long time, explaining that as servants of the Republic we were expected to guard the prison and would be called to account if we complied with their demand. I hoped in vain to tire them out, or to gain time and to be relieved by the coming of the troops.

"As a last expedient it occurred to me to praise their exploit. Seeing them pleased, I asked them what right they had to such a private enjoyment of their conquest, when it should be shared by the entire nation? I urged them to hasten from this obscure place, too confined for the citizens of Paris to witness their glory, and carry their trophy to the Palais Royal, or to the Garden of the Tuileries, so often trodden by the aristocrats, and plant it there as an eternal monument of their victory.

"The idea was approved. With the cry, 'To the Palais Royal!' they departed. Scarcely had they gone when the mayor arrived, and was greatly relieved to learn not only that no one had entered the Tower, but that the royal prisoners had not been allowed to approach the windows and were in ignorance of the cause of the noise which they had heard."

This agony, at least, Marie Antoinette was spared, though she was not long left in ignorance of the death of her friend.

The demoniac procession marched to the Palais Royal, the home of the Duc d'Orléans, known now as Philippe Égalité. Where was the unworthy brother-in-law of the Princess, as she made her last visit to the palace whose threshold she had thought never again to cross? Were there only jewelers and restaurant-keepers who looked from the long arcades upon that strange *fête* in the gardens of Richelieu and Mazarin?

It is reported that a creature of Robespierre's brought him a hand of the Princess as he was dining with the triumvirs near the prison of La Force.

It was passed carelessly around the table with heartless compliments upon its elegance, and returned to Robespierre. He placed a rose within the stiffening fingers, remarking that in doing so he fulfilled a pledge made to a friend whose gift she had once spurned.

Philippe Égalité himself had short triumph in that passive acceptance of the token given in his name, for, distrusted by the party with which he had affiliated, he was arrested as an aristocrat and guillotined in spite of his

renunciation of his titles and privileges. Despised alike by high and low he gave back scorn for scorn, and met his death with an intrepidity worthy of a better life. His widow (the gentle daughter of the Duc de Penthièvre, who died heartbroken on the news of the murder of the Princesse de Lamballe) was long imprisoned and banished, but returned to France on the accession of her son, Louis Philippe.

It was her first care to build at Dreux a splendid mausoleum for her family, but the most diligent search could not authenticate the remains of the Princesse de Lamballe.

After the tragedy the steward of the Duc de Penthièvre had presented himself to the authorities, asking that the corpse of the Princess might be delivered to him for burial. He was informed that it had been thrust coffinless, with those of other victims, into a trench in the cemetery of the Foundlings. A few precious souvenirs found upon her person were regained,¹ but the dust of the Bourbon

¹ In the Procès Verbal of the Section of Quinze Vingts these minutes were entered:

"September 3rd, 1792, being the fourth year of Liberty and Equality, presented themselves the citizens Jacques Havelin, drummer of the section of the Halles, and Jean Gabriel Querouel, cabinet-maker, rue Faubourg Saint Antoine,

Princess had been mingled indistinguishably with that of the humblest of the nameless children of France.

bearers of the body of the *ci-devant* princess who had been killed at the Hôtel de La Force, and declared to us that they found in her clothing, and deposited with the *greffier* of the National Assembly, these objects, to wit:

"1 little book bound in red morocco, having for title, *The Imitation of Jesus Christ*.

"1 pocket book, containing 18 assignats of 5 louis each. [It was afterwards discovered that the deponents had abstracted a trifle of over seventy other assignats.]

"1 gold ring with a blue stone, turning and showing a lock of white hair, with this device—'Whitened by misfortune.'

"1 small embroidered picture, representing a heart bound with thorns, a fleur-de-lis above, and this legend below,—
'Jesu salva nos perimur.'"

The tradition that the hand of the Princess was carried to Robespierre is not a figment of the author's imagination, but is given by Bertin. The mill-stone of the gods had turned.





CHAPTER X

AT THE INN OF THE GOLDEN PELICAN. TWO LEGENDS OF THE ECHOES OF CHÂTEAU d'O

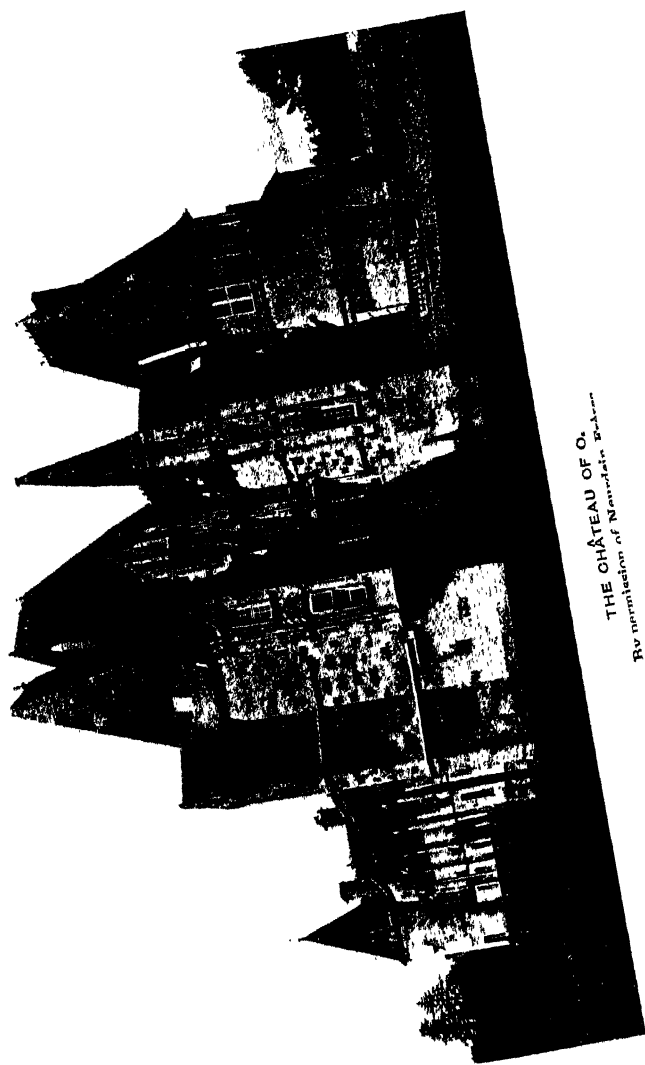
I

THE ROOM WITHOUT A DOOR

OF all the mythological or heraldic monsters that have been blazoned upon the signs of inns, or have ramped on the finals of their weather-cocks, none seemed to us so grotesquely absurd in execution, so manifestly mendacious in meaning, as the Golden Pelican.

"A pelican in her piety," the jargon of the heralds would have denominated the fabulous fowl that with outstretched wings struck its beak so nonchalantly into its maternal bosom, from which there trickled a stream of recently repainted gore, clamorously welcomed by a mob of cannibalistic fledglings.

"Madame divines the signification," our



THE CHÂTEAU OF O.
By permission of Naurdin Dubois

host remarked, with his head cocked admiringly on one side; "the rapacious young ones are our guests, who devour our substance: the self-sacrificing pelican—it is I who give my life-blood for my patrons.

"It was my great-grandfather's conceit. 'There are landlords,' he used to say, 'who bleed their customers, but it is not so that I understand the profession of innkeeping. It is to me a real pleasure to see my goslings (I should say my "peliclings") feed. While I have a drop of blood in my body it is yours, little ones; refresh yourselves and go and come again. As for the pay, that is in truth a necessary but an entirely subordinate matter.'

"We have always been like that, devoted to this old inn of the Golden Pelican, though we barely make our living here. If we had not cared so much for the place of our birth we would have moved away long ago; but we could not live away from the château of O. The inn and the château have been companions for centuries. I verily believe, Madame, that if the Golden Pelican went away the château would ooze tears until the water in its moats turned brackish."

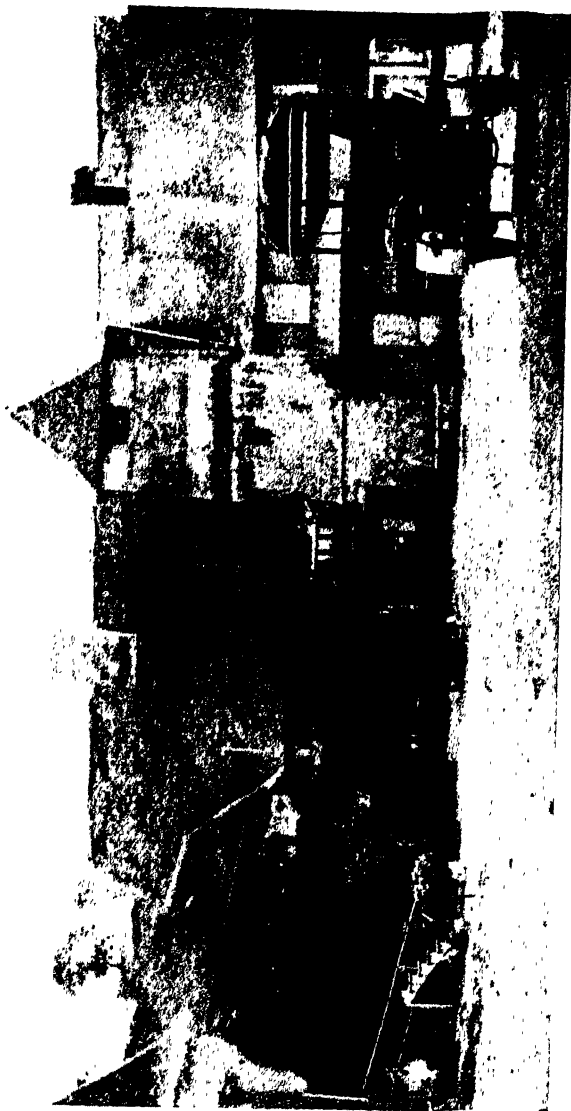
This was our introduction to Mortrée, the little village whose name seems to be an

imperfect anagram of the words *terre morte*,—a dead village to all that concerns the life of the world of to-day. Far away from the great cities and the arteries of travel, its forests rise like islands in the illimitable sea of plains which supply grain and pasturage to many a *haras* of great Norman horses. As the race of horses has improved in the region, developing specimens of gigantic size, so the human breed has dwindled to the puny stature most desirable for jockeys.

The Golden Pelican depended for its custom on racing men or owners of stud farms, and the inn was conspicuous for its lack of all modern improvements.

But driving all day through charming Normandy so soothes the nerves and satisfies the eye that when one alights at night at an old hostelry, and entering the great kitchen sees the firelight dancing reflected from the polished coppers, the fowls roasting on the spit, and the tables in the adjoining room spread with coarse but white linen and set with flowered faience of Rouen, and the cider served in pewter tankards of the last century, one does not cavil that the ceilings are low and the tiled floor uneven.

The landlord of the Golden Pelican was



A TYPICAL NORMANDY INN.
(The Golden Lion at Beaumont le Roger.)

a wizened little creature, with a preternaturally lively imagination and restless tongue. Tourists never visited Mortrée except to see the Château d'O, and he had provided himself with a stock of its legends, which he retailed, not all at once, but with a fine discrimination as to time, place, and audience.

He never told practical, unsentimental persons the gruesome tradition of the room without a door, or his story of his Chouan ancestor to an individual devoid of any lingering sympathy with the old régime. How he divined that we were worthy to listen to both tales I cannot guess; but after guiding us to the unoccupied château and watching our enthusiasm for the lovely Gothic front with its peaked roofs and oriel windows, and our admiration for the Renaissance court, built by the infamous friend of the most despicable of French kings, he beamed upon us approvingly; and when we went so far as to show interest in the principal façade, rebuilt in the time of the Grand Monarque, he slapped his thigh with delight.

"One sees well," he exclaimed, "that you know nothing of architecture, for you like it *all*."

"There was one architect here from Paris who admired the Gothic side, but he said that

this wing was built *en style de caserne* (in the style of a barracks). There was another who said that the old portion had no right to exist, it was so inconvenient. So they wrangle among themselves, these learned ones, while ignorant people, Madame, like you and me, like all its faces. It is as though a mother should love her child only when a babe. The château is my child. This oldest part was its boyhood, all vagaries and wilful escapades; that well-ordered portico is its middle life, beautiful, perfect. This monotonous front, with its wearisome repetition of windows, like the retold anecdotes of a doting old man, and its wavering balustraded cornice, a feeble attempt at boastfulness, remind me that my child is getting on in years, but that he is just the finest product of humanity that the good God ever made, a courtly mannered, high-minded old French nobleman."

"You speak from acquaintance," I said. "There are not many of them left."

"More than when the château was new, Madame. The race was new then, too. The seigneurs who lived here in the early days were a bad lot, but their descendants have had their schooling in a hard school and through suffering have learned compassion

There is no better man in France than the present owner of the château, but things have happened here in the olden time that must have made Satan envious. Take, for instance, the chapel on the edge of the wood. You asked me if there was any explanation to be given why the little sacristy at its back was without a door, useless little room that it is, into which no one can enter save through the broken roof. Madame is not of hereabouts or she would not have asked that question. It is long, long, since there has been service in that chapel. It was built by the seigneur of the middle château, the Marquis d'O. Madame has heard of him perhaps? "

"Yes," we replied, "for all the world knows of Francis d'O. It is not strange that the chapel remained unfinished, for the shameless *Surintendant des Finances* and *mignon* of Henri III. was as notorious for his cruelty at the Massacre of St. Bartholomew as for the unlawful use which he made of the public funds in building this château. One can well imagine that he had little use for a chapel."

"The Marquis! no, Madame; but the Marquise, yes.

"This is a lonely place for a gay young

creature like the Marquise d'O, and it was no better in those days, when no automobiles could come tearing down from Paris in an afternoon.

“So, from sheer want of something better with which to occupy her time, just as a man in such circumstances might take to drinking or gaming with boors unworthy of his society, this pretty woman took to religion. The Curé of Mortrée, her confessor, was young and handsome, and of noble family: after that is said, what more natural than that Madame the Marquise should be *dévoté*? There is a wheezy old organ in the village church which she would play. The Curé had a fine voice; when he intoned the mass it was a noble chant, not the grumbling of beasts, and when the Marquise led the choir boys in the responses with her clear soprano, they say it was like the harmony of the angels. But there! why make a long story when the thing is so evident? Monsieur grew—what shall I say?—not jealous, he was too cold for that, but suspicious and hateful. He forbade the Marquise to go to the village church. Why should she demean herself by worshipping God with a pack of common peasants? He would build her a chapel in the park where she might be

as religious as she pleased, in an aristocratic fashion.

“So the lady designed the chapel herself, and milord had the best workmen from Touraine, and the best stone, as Madame has doubtless remarked. There was even too much stone, and a few great blocks lay piled up beside the chapel, for the Marquis would not have them removed,—he had a use for them.

“He had a vault dug under the chapel, with a trap-door leading to it from the sacristy, where he said he would be buried some day. We all believe that the Marquise d’O lies there now, though none saw her body placed in the crypt and the door was walled up before she died; but the peasants of Mortrée attended her funeral and with their faces pressed against the grille of the park heard the mad priest, who was her lover, read the service for the dead,—heard, too, the great miracle of the supernatural responses that set them all running like scared deer to their coverts.

“Yes, I know that I am ahead of my story, but it is not an easy one to tell. The Marquis was called to Paris. I ask you, Was it a good thing to leave that foolish woman here with nothing but religion to amuse her?

“The Curé came every day and chanted the service, and the lady sang the responses, but there were no choir boys to accompany her. She did not miss them, their voices chimed so well together. He would begin to sing as soon as he entered the gate at the end of the long avenue, a half-mile from the château, ‘Ave Maria!’ It was her name, and when he sang the praises of the Virgin it may be they had a double signification to them both. Be that as it may, she would place herself at her open window and answer,—singing loud and clear,—so that he heard her from his first step on the grounds. He would pass chanting to the chapel, and she was not long in joining him. When the Marquis d’O came home it chanced that he entered the park by the other gate and heard the antiphonal and saw the procession of two. If he liked neither, he gave no sign, for he passed directly to the château, and when his wife entered told her gaily that he had a post at Court, and that their château life was ended. She should mope no longer in this lonesome place, for they would leave as soon as might be for Paris.

“She dared too much at that, and asked that the priest might go to Paris with them.

“He answered her roughly, and forbade her to see him again. The Marquis hunted the next day and the day following, while his lady set the château in order for their leave-taking. At last all was done and the servants dismissed, for the Marquis said he would have a new staff at Paris. He would not even allow the Marquise to keep her maid. Only the coachman, an old soldier of the Marquis’s, and as bad as his master, remained on the morning that was set for their departure, when the Marquis went to Mortrée for a workman to make all fast.

“The Marquise had written the priest to come no more, but it is not in mortal man to obey a command like that, and when the Marquis returned with the mason from Mortrée, and both walked noisily past the chapel, the priest came out of the door with a white face.

“‘Ah, that is you, Father Anselme,’ said the Marquis; ‘I asked Madame to write you of our going. Will you step into the château and bid her farewell? I will join you directly.’

“The priest made his excuses. He had only stopped for his breviary, which he had left on his last visit. He was on his way to see a sick parishioner; he would not delay them. Would

Monsieur be good enough to present his farewells? The Marquis kept him company for a short distance, with his eye on the chapel. 'By the way,' he asked, as he politely opened the park gate, 'you did not leave a chorister or any one else in the chapel? I was about to lock the door. You were quite alone?'

"'Quite alone,' replied the priest tranquilly, for he had just given Madame his key, and knew that if locked in she could open the door.

"Later in the day the coach of the Marquis rolled away toward Paris. That is all, Madame,—all that Mortrée knew for many years of the story; and it was not until the mason was dying that he confessed to the Curé that he had walled up the door which led from the chapel into the little sacristy. He had fancied that he heard moans within, but the Marquis repeated the priest's assurance that there was no one there. My lady knew well that her husband would have killed her on the spot had she shown herself.

"Perhaps she fancied she could climb through the narrow window, but the workman barred it before he left. The Marquis had told him that he intended to sell the château

and he wished no one else to use the vault which he had intended for his family.

"When the Curé heard that confession he went mad, and ran straight to the château gate. It was double-locked and chained and rusted, for no one had occupied the château, but he beat upon it and called aloud as though his lady could hear after all those years.

"His parishioners flocked to the spot and watched him in his agony. Then one remembered how certain persons had heard strange cries after the château had been closed, and the wretched priest shrieked, 'She was murdered, Marie d'O, Marie d'O!'

"Then as by miracle a voice, as that of a spirit in pain, came flying from the distant chapel, 'Murdered, murdered, Marie d'O.'

" 'It is her ghost,' the peasants cried, 'and it cannot rest, for she was buried in sin with no sacred rites.'

" 'It is false!' cried the priest. 'I had her confession. Be witness, all of you, while I give her Christian burial.' Standing there he intoned the Office for the Dead. And at intervals that unearthly voice flung back the responses, the soul of the Marquise replying to her lover as she had so often done in life.

"He was insane, Madame, and every day

until he was led away to the madhouse he went to that grille and sobbed and prayed her forgiveness that he had suspected no evil, and had not come there in her lifetime when she called in vain for help in her long agony. And always the voice came back, heartbreakingly pitiful, repeating his words of remorse and love.

“For doubtless the rite which he had repeated was powerless to give rest to her guilty soul. Yes, Madame, you may hear her for yourself if you will. There is a moon to-night: the walk is not long. If you and Monsieur choose to go I will show you the way.”

It was, of course, an echo, as the landlord of the Golden Pelican afterward frankly admitted, and in telling us his second legend, in which it played its part, he from the start attempted no illusion. No one should visit the château of O without making trial of this wonderfully perfect reverberation. Take your stand on the rising ground to the right of the long avenue in going from Mortrée, with the wall of the wood behind you, and if it is on some moonlight night, you cannot but be moved by that mysterious voice, melodious and melancholy as the tones of distant reed instruments, flinging back from

the lonely château the refrain of an old love song

*“ Je vous aime, je vous aime,
Toujours le même,
Marie d'O, Marie d'O.”*

II

THE MARQUISE AND THE SCREECH-OWLS

BUT it was not to hear legends of the far-away days of the Renaissance that we had taken lodging at the inn of the Golden Pelican. A curiosity possessed us for a time nearer our own which witnessed the death-struggle of the old régime, and in which so many of the stately homes of the *noblesse* went down in fire and blood. Remembering the long-delayed revenge for which the peasants of France had waited, one wonders that any of the châteaux exist to-day, and yet in the west of France, and not alone in La Vendée and in Brittany, the land of old customs, but in the forest region, known as the Bocage, in the province of Maine, were found some of the most remarkable examples of loyalty to a lost cause that have ever been recorded.

The gallant Marceau and the cruel Kleber failed alike in extinguishing the zeal of the

benighted peasants. Their leader, the young Prince de Talmont, was guillotined in front of his ancestral château of Laval. Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette had forfeited their lives upon the scaffold, but with suicidal fealty the peasants announced their allegiance to Louis XVII., their boy-King in the Temple, and when the unfortunate child perished, a martyr to the tortures of his keeper, Simon, the mysterious counter-revolution kept breaking out again and again, like fire that refused to be smothered until the brothers of Louis XVI., the Comtes of Provence and Artois, and Louis Philippe as well, had been weighed in the balance and found wanting.

Long after the country at large had transferred its allegiance to the Republic an organisation of brigands called the Chouannerie still existed, formed of desperate characters, many of them outlaws, the exact reproduction of Du Guesclin's retainers, whose proper career was war and pillage, and who could not settle down to the avocations of peace.

It was hard to find any one who would avow sympathy with these bandits, or indeed with the vanished system, but in our wanderings that summer we had learned that the landlord of the Golden Pelican was a descendant of

a noted Chouan, and could, were he so disposed, tell us tales from his own family archives, fascinating in their horror.

"Chouans? yes, there had been such an organisation long ago, but it was now only a term of contempt applied to those who remembered the old régime with tenderness."

Finding that we were of this number, he gave us his confidence and told us many tales which he had heard from his grandfather. The old man had been in his youth a *faux saulnier*, or contraband dealer in salt, and intimately connected with the Cottureau family, who followed the same illicit business in the neighbourhood of Laval. On the wide salt marshes of Brittany this necessity of life was manufactured at an almost nominal price, but the *gabelle*, or duty, instituted by Louis XIV. made it a luxury almost beyond the reach of the poor, and instituted the smuggling trade between Brittany and Normandy. What we did not at first understand was the fact that the suppression of this tax by the Republic should have raised such opposition from the peasants.

"Do you not see?" our landlord explained; "all the *contrabandiers* made a good livelihood from their sales until the Republic

spoiled their business by doing away with the *gabelle*? Of course the smugglers hated the Republic, and longed for the good old days, when they found their occupation gone. They were determined men who had fought or deceived the officers of the law for years. They knew all the hidden paths through the Bocage, all the difficult passes across the hills, and the best fords. They were admirably fitted by nature and education for guerrilla warfare, and what more natural than that they should throw themselves into the movement that was agitating western France? The Bretons are fond of old institutions, loyal to Church and King, and when the mad Republicans at Paris massacred one and strove to abolish the other, and, moreover, instituted conscriptions to take our young men from their homes, the fugitive priests preached a crusade which the peasants took up. The Comte d'Artois was somewhere in foreign parts, raising an army, which we expected would land on the coast of Brittany. The Prince de Talmont had organised an army to resist the Republicans who were marching to crush us under Kleber.

"It was then that Jean Cottureau organised his band of smugglers; their rendezvous was

Cottureau's house in the forest of Concise, where he had a little pear orchard, and his father exercised his business of furnishing the sabot-makers with blocks of wood suitable to cut into wooden shoes. Their cart in the old times had always hidden sacks of salt under the fruit or billets of wood: now it went and came laden with guns and ammunition. Their war was one of ambuscades and surprises; cutting off stragglers, intercepting bearers of despatches and trains of supplies, when not too well guarded. Cottureau had invented a series of signals in imitation of the cry of the *chouette*, or screech-owl. So in time Jean Cottureau became better known as Jean Chouan, and the name was given to all his followers and to the rebellion itself.

"It was in the spring of 1793, just before the battles of Croix Bataille and Château Gontier. The Prince de Talmont commanded the cavalry, all the *élite* of the country *noblesse* loyal to the Bourbons. The Chouans were reconnoitring the approach of the Republican army from the east and carrying messages back and forward. The Comte d'Artois was daily expected, and all along the coast Breton peasants kept watch from their belfries for the approach of a fleet of war-ships. This was the

state of things when, just after nightfall a travelling carriage drew up at the door of the Golden Pelican. It was mud-bespattered and the horses were jaded, but it bore a coronet on its panels, and although the coachman and footman were not in livery, my grandfather knew them at once for servants of some noble family. A lady alighted, followed by her maid, both nearly overcome with fatigue, and no wonder! for they had kept in advance of the Republican army all the way from Paris.

“ ‘We must rest,’ she said, ‘for not only are the horses worn out, but I cannot endure the jolting over these terrible roads for another mile.’

“ ‘You shall have the best that my inn affords,’ said my grandfather, ‘and I will defend you with my life.’

“ ‘Are we, then, still in danger?’ she asked, anxiously.

“ ‘Nowhere more so,’ my grandfather replied. ‘That wretched Committee of Public Safety at Paris has sent down its agent, who, encouraged by the knowledge that the army is on its way to support his action, is making domiciliary visits in search of proscribed and suspected persons. The Mayor of Alençon has been obliged to yield a grudging assistance and

to lodge in his prison all whom this devil of an official arrests. He hopes that the Vendean army will reach Alençon before the blues, in which case, of course, the prison doors will be thrown open, but even such temporary lodgment is not for the Marquise de Fontenay, if the landlord of the Golden Pelican can prevent it.'

"The Marquise started. 'You recognise me then?' she said.

"None who had the privilege of seeing you when you were a guest at our château could forget you, Madame.'

"Then why can I not be the guest of the Château d'O again, since by stopping at the Golden Pelican I endanger its landlord as well as myself?'

"Impossible, Madame! the château is deserted, its owners have emigrated: even the servants have run away, each taking some article of furniture as a souvenir. It is true that I have the keys in my keeping, but there is nothing within the walls wherewith Madame could be made comfortable. I went through it yesterday with the agent of whom I spoke to you, the bloodthirsty Tallien; but he found nothing. The poor château was as naked as we shall all be on the day of resurrection.'

“ ‘So it is Tallien who has been sent here to pacify the province of Maine? I have heard of him in Paris. He is, as you say, a devil, but it would please me to outwit him. If he searched the château yesterday and found it vacant, he is not likely to come again until I shall be out of harm’s way. It has a stable where the horses can be stalled, and the coach hidden. Take me there and bring bedding and food. . I shall find worse lodging before I cross the frontier. I came in this roundabout way because the direct routes to the south are in the hands of the Republicans, but the west and south-west of France are loyal and will not betray me. I am on the way to join my father, Count Cabarrus, in Spain, for nothing but flight can save a friend of the Queen’s from the guillotine.’

“Convinced by the arguments of the Marquise, my grandfather hastily loaded a cart with what was necessary and led the way to the vacant château. It seemed doubly desolate as they walked through the long salon by the light of his lantern, a room which the Marquise remembered as illuminated in honour of her former visit with a hundred wax-lights. Half-burned tapers were in the sockets of the girandoles now, but the great mirrors, which

gave the effect of still other empty apartments, were the only furniture left. 'I remember how we danced here,' said the Marquise; 'the floor is polished still, if one only had music, but it would be dull dancing with only one's own reflection for a partner.'

"My grandfather took her to the oldest wing of the château, whose façade is such a tangle of beautiful tracery, as though roses had clambered to the very *girouettes* on the sharply pinnacled roof, had interlaced the dormers on their way, and had then been turned to stone.

"On this side there is a suite of three cozy rooms; a bedroom in the oriel, a salon with two wide mullioned windows, and a guard-chamber in the tower near the entrance, where her two servants could easily defend the Marquise, as the other two rooms could only be approached through it, and the windows were protected by the moat. The furniture of this suite, settles, tables, and buffet, was built into the rooms, and the bedstead had proved too massive to be removed. My grandfather lighted a fire, spread the table, and made all as comfortable as he could. The footman brought in the carriage-ropes and cushions, which he spread upon the settles, and the

maid unpacked her mistress's boxes, giving little feminine touches here and there, so that the Marquise was quite satisfied with her surroundings.

"As my grandfather drove into the stable-yard on his return to the Golden Pelican he noticed with surprise that several horses were fastened to the racks, and he hurried into the inn, wondering who these late customers might be.

"His wife was busy preparing a meal, her face white with fear: the men drinking in the tap-room he recognised as the local constabulary of the town of Alençon, and was less surprised than frightened when the redoubtable Tallien laid a firm hand upon his shoulder, and with a keen look which seemed to search the very marrow in his bones explained that he desired the keys of Château d'O, in order to search for some papers which he had reason to believe were concealed in a secret cupboard.

"'Certainly, certainly,' my grandfather stammered; 'I will take you there myself—in the morning, but the roads are so miry and the night so dark, Monsieur surely does not intend to go out again to-night?'

"'Of a certainty I do,' Tallien replied sternly. 'The night is not so dark or the

roads so bad but you have just made a long excursion. I have an idea that I shall find more than papers at the château. I have just received word from Paris to keep a lookout for the fugitive Marquise de Fontenay. You tremble! I thought so. Men, we will not wait for supper. Time enough to feast after our game is taken.'

"The hungry men grumbled, and my grandfather perjured himself, swearing by all the saints that he had never seen the Marquise de Fontenay; that the château was as empty as the stomachs of his constables; and that his wife was preparing a fricassee of some tender young pheasants which he had snared that afternoon in the park of the château. At a wink from her husband my grandmother ran into the barnyard for the pullets which were the only pheasants which the inn afforded. As she did so she noticed in a wicker cage some young owlets which the stable-boy had imprisoned, and, thinking that they might add a gamy flavour to the stew, had their necks wrung in a twinkling.

"She was not so quick, however, but that they uttered some dying hoots, which were repeated by the maternal owl who had been hovering about their prison, and who now

flew off toward the forest, uttering dismal wails for her murdered offspring. These sounds were heard within the tavern.

"What is that?" cried Tallien, noticing the startled looks of his men.

" 'Only some owlets,' my grandfather replied, 'that we have shut up in the stable.' "

" 'Show them to me,' Tallien commanded curtly, but they found the cage empty and the landlady of the Golden Pelican would have died before she would have confessed that she was fabricating her pheasant stew with screech-owls. So Tallien believed that my grandfather had lied; that there had been no owlets in the barnyard; and that the cries which he had heard might be signals of some sort, perhaps a warning which, repeated by one sentinel to another, would notify his would-be prisoner at the château of his presence. Another man might have given up his purpose, but not Tallien. He was used to striking quickly, and he never lost his head in emergencies.

" 'To saddle!' he commanded; 'the pheasants will wait, but our other bird may not. And you, my host, will do me the favour of coming with me.' "

"This destroyed my grandfather's last hope,

of running to the château by a cross-cut and getting the Marquise out of harm's way. He saddled his horse and took his place reluctantly by Tallien's side.

"A vague hope was forming in my grandfather's mind of introducing Tallien and his men into the opposite wing of the château and of confining them there while he gave the alarm to the Countess; but this last despairing device was made impossible as they rode up to the grand grille, from which a broad, straight avenue led to the main entrance of the building. From this point the long drawing-room was plainly visible, and what was my grandfather's dismay on discovering that the Marquise de Fontenay, inspired by I know not what foolhardy longing for brilliancy, had lighted all the candles, and a flood of light poured from eleven curtainless windows! Within, the silhouette of a woman's figure flashed across the panes; it was the Marquise, and suddenly the door was flung open and she ran down the steps to observe the effect of her illumination.

" 'Wait for me here,' Tallien commanded his men, as he leapt from his horse, and handed them the rein; 'I will return with our prisoner within the hour.'

"The Marquise was facing the château and so absorbed that she did not notice our footsteps until we were close upon her. Tallien bowed, and the light from the château windows fell full upon his lithe figure and clear-cut, determined face. The Marquise turned deadly white, for she recognised him on the instant, but she moderated not a gesture of her grand air.

" 'To what do I owe the honour of this visit?' she asked haughtily.

" 'Madame the Marquise will believe me when I say that it is with pain that I inform her that she is under arrest.'

" 'Ah!' The Marquise drew a long breath. She had expected the answer and was trying to pull herself together to meet the exigency. Outwardly she was perfectly calm.

" 'May I not be permitted to rest until morning? Show Monsieur Tallien that if he will deign to occupy the guard-chamber how securely he will hold his prisoner.'

"He frowned at the word. He had been studying her intently and she was very beautiful.

"She saw the admiration in his eyes and took hope. 'If Monsieur is too courteous to permit me to dwell on the fact, that he is my

gaoler, we will forget it for the evening, though the situation remains the same, and we will imagine that Monsieur is my guest.'

" 'Unfortunately my instructions are explicit,' Tallien replied, regretfully; 'I am to lodge Madame at the *château fort* of Alençon until it is possible to escort her to Paris.'

"She gave a little gesture of despair and my grandfather pleaded, 'Monsieur, this journey is impossible; be merciful if you would obtain mercy, and grant Madame's request. There are straw-ricks beside the stable; the men can bring the straw into the great ballroom and camp there for the night.'

"While Tallien wavered the lights in the salon began to go out, and as though this were a signal the bereaved owl, who had followed my grandfather from the inn, uttered a mournful cry from the wood between the parterre and the grille. She was just at the spot to set the echoes flying, and they came back over their heads apparently from the other side of the *château*. Tallien was a brave man, but he had not a doubt that he had been led into a trap, and that the park was full of Chouans. The militiamen at the gate were of the same opinion and rode madly away. Tallien heard the hoof-beats grow fainter, and

knew that he was deserted. My grandfather grinned, and a look of triumph illumined the face of the Marquise.

“ ‘The landlord of the Golden Pelican is not the traitor that I had thought him,’ she said; ‘he knew that I was well protected when he allowed you to make this little call, Monsieur Tallien. My friends the Chouans are sometimes more enthusiastic than gentle in their reception of the officials of the Republic. Will you not change your mind and accept my hospitality?’

“For an instant he had thought of fleeing down the avenue and attempting to rejoin his men, but the owl hooted again, and as the echoes were repeated it seemed to Tallien that every tree sheltered a Chouan, ready to fall upon him.

“ ‘I am at your mercy, Madame,’ he said with a certain dignity; ‘the tables are turned.’

“ ‘Not at all,’ she replied merrily; ‘you simply consent to be my guest for the night.’

“ ‘I will guarantee your safety if you accept,’ my grandfather assured him, ready to die of laughter at the false situation. The Marquise queened it the better because she was not acting. Like Tallien, she believed

the château surrounded by Jean Cottereau's band, who would have delighted in skinning him alive, in crucifying him, or in roasting him over a slow fire if he had been really in their power. My grandfather lent himself to their delusion, and advised Tallien to give him his pistols, and to leave his warrant of arrest in Madame's possession, as it would be awkward circumstantial evidence in case Jean Cottereau insisted on examining him. So with Tallien's consent the Marquise burned it on the hearth, and wrote instead a little note begging him to visit her as an old and dear friend, which note she had him place in his pocket as explanation of his nocturnal call.

"My grandmother, who had seen the constable's men clatter panic-stricken out of Mortrée, hurried to the château all agog with curiosity as to what had happened, and bringing with her as an excuse a basket containing the owl fricassee and a bottle of the best wine which the cellars afforded. These refreshments the worthy landlord had the pleasure of serving to the Marquise and her unwilling guest, so that Tallien, without knowing it, actually ate the Chouans who had frightened him.

"The Marquise, during the meal and after

it, deployed all the arts of fascination, in which she was a past-mistress. She was shrewd enough to see that she had to do with no ordinary man; that great ideas were seething in his brain, and that he burned to leave his mark upon the century. So she drew him out and made him talk of his ambitions and his dreams. She reproached him not at all for his opposition to a vicious system, but begged that the innocent and the benevolent, who had the misfortune to be born aristocrats, might be permitted to throw aside their old titles and privileges and join in the new movement; that, in short, "liberty, equality, and fraternity" might be extended to every human being, noble as well as peasant. Tallien listened and became doubly her captive. Hitherto he had thought only of rivalling Robespierre in cruelty: now he had a glimpse of a wider humanitarianism. What if he could sweep into public favour on the wave of a great popular reaction against the needless ferocity of the time? Possibly the realisation that he was himself a prisoner, as it were under sentence of death, gave realism to his attempt to put himself mentally in the place of the proscribed aristocrats; and the arguments addressed to his reason lost none of their force

because they were uttered by a charming woman. At all events he was won, and from that time to the end of his life, in heart and thought, body and soul, he was absolutely hers. When, at a late hour, he bade her good night, he bent low over her hand and murmured, 'Whatever may be the outcome of this adventure I shall not regret it, for death were a light penalty to pay for having known you.'

"As my grandfather kept his sleepy watch an hour later in front of the portcullis of the château he saw Tallien open his chamber window and, holding to its crocketed mouldings, lean far out over the black water of the moat which lapped the foot of the tower. It was not with any thought of escape, but simply to gaze at the oriel window opposite, behind whose darkened casement the Marquise was dreaming of her triumph.

"Tallien remained staring into the darkness for a long time. 'I wish to Heaven you would run away,' thought my grandfather, 'for how I am to explain matters to your satisfaction in the morning passes my invention.' He was still cudgelling his brains for some sequel to the comedy when his quick ear caught the sound of a horse's hoofs, now upon the hard

road and now muffled by the turf, evidently Tallien's horse, wandering aimlessly in the park. He secured the animal and led it to a postern-gate, for it had suggested a way of escape, both for Tallien and himself, by which the sensitive and vindictive man need never know that his fears had been played upon. Accordingly my grandfather slipped quietly to his door and whispered that by the order of the Marquise he had come to set him free. He led him through the park by a circuitous path, and advised him as he mounted to ride in the direction of Paris, as Alençon was in the possession of the Vendean army.

“‘She can then pursue her journey in safety,’ was Tallien's reply. ‘Tell her for me that without that knowledge I would not have gone; that I owe my life to her and some day will repay the debt.’

“Will you believe it, Madame, when the Marquise awoke in the morning, after a refreshing night's rest, and learned that there were no Chouans in the neighbourhood, but that my grandfather had gotten rid of her enemy, she was not in the least grateful? The freaks of the female mind are incomprehensible. She drove away calling my grandfather a dolt and an idiot, bidding him henceforward

to confine his attention to the fabrication of pheasant stews and not to meddle with the affairs of his betters.

"She was to learn from what danger she had escaped when she was arrested at Bordeaux, and, as a tricky fate would have it, thrown into prison there to fall a second time into Tallien's power; for he was sent that very year to Bordeaux to establish the reign of terror in that city, and to bring the aristocrats to the guillotine. Madame knows the rest, for it is called history, and is written in the school-books; but it's a love story all the same, and lucky it was for all that remained of the *noblesse* of France that the leader of the Terror lost his heart to his victim, and in saving her saved them."

Familiarity does not diminish the strangeness of the story—how Tallien, sent to Bordeaux to stamp out every vestige of the old régime, became the protector of the *noblesse* and acquitted all who were brought before his tribunal. This was not the sort of service which he had been deputed to perform, and he was speedily recalled to Paris to account for his peculiar conduct. But already there had set in a current of dissatisfaction against Robespierre, and Tallien, rallying the

reactionists, was made president of the convention. Then it was war to the knife between the two leaders. Robespierre would not give up without a struggle. Tallien was expelled from the Jacobin Club, and knowing that the Marquise de Fontenay had returned to Paris under his protection, and guessing that only a deep affection could have performed the miraculous change in Tallien's conduct, Robespierre thought to overwhelm him by arresting the one dearest to him.

But Robespierre little understood the man with whom he had to do. Instead of cringing to the tyrant for the life of his beloved, this act goaded Tallien to desperation, and he resolved upon the death of his enemy.

The Red Terror had immolated its victims long enough; the very murderers were sickening of the carnage. Within six weeks thirteen hundred and sixty-one persons were sentenced, but the monotonous butcheries of each succeeding day could not empty the prisons which continual arrests filled to overflowing.

The time had certainly come to stay this Juggernaut, but it had gained so frightful an impetus that no one dared place himself in its

way. Life was valueless to Tallien without the Marquise de Fontenay, and he determined to fight the tyrant, and quickly. Others had allowed themselves to be massacred unresistingly,—an indifference born of despair seemed to have fallen on all of Robespierre's victims.

They seemed desirous only of preserving to the last the traditions and deportment of "*la haute politesse*," and of exhibiting the *sang froid* of "*la confrérie bien née*."

In the Conciergerie they rehearsed with a chair, the mounting of the scaffold and applauded each other when it was accomplished gracefully. They passed the time with piquet and chess; and Captain Lequay, called to his execution in the midst of a game, said merrily to his opponent: "I was beating you, Baron, but never mind, I will give you your revenge in Paradise."

This was the society which the Marquise de Fontenay rejoined in the prison of Saint Lazaire, where she found many old friends whom she had not seen since she distributed the lottery-prizes at the last village *fête* at the Trianon.

The tourist of to-day who stands in the Palace of Versailles, before Charles Louis

Muller's great canvas, *L'Appel des Condamnés sous la Terreur*, can, from a study of the faces of the men and women who listened to this momentous roll-call, realise the power of the habitual self-respect which enabled them to face death with dignity if not with resignation. Only one, and she not of noble birth,—Mademoiselle Leroy, an actress,—demands herself by begging for mercy. Only one, the young Mademoiselle de Coigny, is temporarily crazed by the horror of the scene. The venerable Bishop of Agde, across whose knees she has flung herself, places his hand upon her head in benediction while he hears his own name called. André Chénier turns his back to the official and endeavours to fix his mind upon the poem which he is composing, possibly *The Young Captive*, suggested by Mademoiselle de Coigny herself:

“Je ne veux pas mourir encore
Je ne suis qu'au printemps, je veux voir la moisson,
Et comme le soleil de saison en saison
Je veux achever mon année.”

She who had tasted in imagination the bitterness of death was to go out free; but Chénier's head was one of the last to fall before that harvest of murder was ended, and



THE LAST ROLL-CALL UNDER THE TERROR.

From the painting by Louis Muller at Versailles.

By permission of Neudein Frères.

Mademoiselle de Coigny afterward made a collection of his poems and published them as a tribute to the memory of her friend.

The artist has given the centre of his composition to the Marquise. The light of the outer court illumines her white dress, as, buffeted by the mob, the guards hurry her away to receive her condemnation.

She stretches out her arms in farewell to her friends, for she believed at that moment that Tallien had abandoned her, for the night before she had sent him this stinging reproach:

“PRISON OF ST. LAZAIRE.

7 Thermidor.

“The agent of the Police has just told me that tomorrow I must appear before the tribunal, that is to say, the scaffold.

“That is little like the dream I had a night you know of—Robespierre dead, the prisons open. But, thanks to your unspeakable cowardice, there is no one in France capable of realising my dream.”

As she went to her trial a trusty messenger thrust her lover's reply into her hand:

“MADAME,—Let your prudence equal my courage. Reserve your reproaches until they are deserved.”

On that very day Robespierre made his great speech before the convention, defending himself against the criticism on his conduct which he well knew was spoken in the ear among his colleagues. When Barère moved that his address should be printed and distributed among the members, Robespierre had apparently triumphed; but on the following day Tallien took up the speech and point by point turned it against its author. Robespierre tried to defend himself, to explain, but was silenced by a general tumult,—Billaud de Varennes crying, “There is not a man among us who would live under a tyrant’s rule,” while Tallien theatrically raised a dagger, declaring that he had brought it to assassinate this Cromwell if the convention dared not indict him. Again Robespierre pleaded to be allowed to speak, but his voice was drowned by howls of “Down with tyrants!” The president rang his bell violently, and in the first pause in the tumult a member demanded the indictment of Robespierre. His arrest was immediately decreed, and on the 10th Thermidor, on the spot where their victims had suffered, Robespierre, Saint Just, and their associates expiated their career of crime upon the guillotine. The fickle populace of Paris

rushed *en masse* to the prisons, threw open the doors, and the Reign of Terror was over.

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In the general rejoicing which followed, the Marquise de Fontenay, now Madame Tallien, was the heroine of the hour. Admired by all, adored by those who owed their lives to her as our "Lady of Thermidor," no popular actress, great singer, or queen ever received more regal homage. Tallien too had his share of glory, and for the moment was hailed as the Reconstructor of the Republic.

The curtain should fall here, their great rôles acted and a happy marriage their crowning reward. But alas! there is no foundation but mutual love on which such happiness can be built. The Marquise had never truly loved Tallien, and regarded her marriage as an immolation.

Young and beautiful, mad for admiration, she found a cheap intoxication for a time in her popularity, leading the fashion of the town in the properly called *Incroyable* costumes, promenading in the garden of the Palais Royal in a style of dress which would earlier have been deemed *risque* in a ballet,

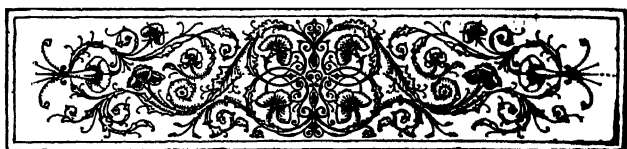
the observed of all observers, the toast of the gilded youth of Paris. But the union was ill-assorted, and Tallien, though dominated by his passion for his wife, shocked and irritated the fastidious prejudices of her aristocratic breeding by his clownishness and brutality. Disappointed ambition increased their unhappiness and led to the inevitable divorce. Madame Tallien returned to her own class, and ended a life of sensational vicissitude in the most respectable and uneventful seclusion as the wife of the Prince de Chimay; while Tallien, waging desperately a losing fight against fate, embittered but not conquered, followed Napoleon to Egypt and found in him a protector and a friend.

Of all the châteaux of the lesser nobility, none gives more vividly the impression of a vanished age and a vanished system than the château of O with its melancholy echoes and still more pathetic histories. Other châteaux wake the same feeling in a lesser degree; but none have the poetic charm, the haunting loveliness of this enchanted building.

Ruinous but still beautiful, it dreams of the old régime, and as the owls and the echoes repeat to each other the signals of loyal Vendean peasants perhaps it fancies

itself still protected by faithful retainers from the fate of its sisters, who in blood and flame, in barbaric demolition, or in quiet decay, have left the world less beautiful by their disappearance.





CHAPTER XI

THE BOURBONS AND THEIR CHÂTEAUX

(A SUMMARY OF THE PERIOD FOR THE SERIOUS-MINDED)

TO the student of architecture the actual châteaux of the Bourbons will be more interesting than any romance,—the *mise en scène* of our dramas,—more fascinating than the tragedies and comedies at which we have assisted.

The student of character, on the other hand, will care more for the personality of the actors than for the theatre upon which they moved or the parts they acted, excepting in so far as they were the authors of the play instead of puppets of fate.

From the first the Bourbons invested the line assigned them by destiny with an egoistic originality which had an enormous influence on the trend of the plot of French history. The accession of Henri of Navarre in 1589 elevated for the first time to the throne of France a representative of their house, and simultaneously ushered in a new epoch.

Feudalism had been crushed under the iron heel of Louis XI., the Renaissance had blossomed with Francis I. and faded with the later Valois, and Henri IV. was to inaugurate, and his descendants to continue for two centuries, the era of Modernity.

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It was a new age but not a new dynasty, for the Bourbons, like the Valois, traced their lineage and their claims to Saint Louis. But in 1271, when the sixth and youngest son of that monarch, Robert of Clermont, wedded Beatrix, sole descendant of the rude Archambaults, simple "Sires de Bourbon," there was no probability that among their posterity would be numbered the most magnificent of French kings. It was honour enough for that grasping and unscrupulous race that it was able by this marriage to blazon the lilies of France upon its escutcheon and preserve the name of Bourbon from extinction by accepting a cadet of the royal house as their representative. No greater contrast to the Palace of Versailles can be imagined than the ruins of the *château fort* of Bourbon l'Archambault. Even the grim donjon-tower of Moulins, the home of the Constable de Bourbon, as late as the early sixteenth century, preserves the same characteristics of brute force, rude even for that period.

The contrast tells not alone of vastly different conditions of rank and wealth, but of the radical changes from mediævalism to the modern era. A mere comparison of the homes of this masterful family from this period is a graded staircase, showing how persistently it climbed, until the fourth Henri stepped from the chateau of Pau to the Tuileries, and his grandson, the Grand Monarque, arrived at that toppling eminence beyond which it was impossible for mortal to ascend, and a fall was inevitable.

The consciousness that the death of certain princes might at any time call a Bourbon to the throne was ever present. It led the old Constable de Bourbon

into treason, and mingled with the more heroic motives which influenced Henri of Navarre to accept the chieftainship of the Protestant party. Though he was bred like a simple mountaineer, and won his kingdom by as good fighting as ever the alien Cæsar brought to its conquest, there was no innovation of the old established order: the divine right was his, and the most devoted partisan of the last Valois could not deny it after the death of Henri III. The descendant of Saint Louis and the old barbaric Bourbon barons had shown himself worthy of his fighting ancestry; and in the little space accorded him between his coronation and his assassination he proved himself every inch a king (the one to whom the French look back with most of pride); and the châteaux to be erected by the Bourbons during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were to be royal palaces. This is true, not alone of the reigning branch, but of their cousins, the Condés, the Contis, the Montpensiers, the dukes of Orléans, and of Vendôme. It is true also of the great ministers and of the royal favourites who shared their sovereigns' munificence, and of their children. The other nobles only aped the palatial architecture which their resources would not allow them to rival, and for two hundred years there was scarcely a château of importance erected in France which could not in some sense be characterised as Bourbon.

Henri IV. himself possessed the love of building which distinguished his predecessors. He extended the palaces of Fontainebleau and the Louvre in the directions and in the style in which they had been planned by Lescot and de Lorme, and constructed a

new château at Saint Germain. Though the memory of his residence at the Louvre during the days which followed his marriage with Marguerite of Valois must have seemed to him a horrible dream, he apparently felt no aversion to the palace, but immediately set about continuing the work planned and begun for Catherine de Médicis. To the long wing on the river side, which was to connect the old Louvre with the Tuileries, he added the story above the Jean Goujon frieze—the long suite of apartments between the Gallery of Apollo and the Pavillon de Flore. He pressed forward the work upon the Tuileries, intending to make it his residence, for he appreciated the importance of its situation with entrances both within and outside the city walls, a strategic position which had been utilised by Henri III. for a secret exit when besieged by his subjects. Henri IV. said, too, that he loved to look at Paris across his gardens; and the parterres of the Tuileries, though not so beautiful as those of our own day, were the beginnings of the art of gardening which was to be so wonderfully developed by Le Nôtre.

But Henri of Navarre was not to enjoy fully the fruit of his great labours, or to connect his name in any important way with the architecture of the opening century. It was for his widowed queen, Marie de Médicis, to erect (1615-20) the Palace of the Luxembourg, which was to become the inspiration of a distinctly new departure in château-building.

Designed as her dowager residence when she retired from the royal Palace of the Tuileries, it was none the less palatial in its pretensions. The *régente* had not yet measured her strength with Richelieu, and she

fought her losing battle for supremacy over her son with reckless audacity. She spared no expense in the appointments of her palace, whose erection was confided to Jacques Desbrosses, one of the most able architects of the period. Sauval is unstinted in his admiration: "In all Europe," he declares, "there is not a house which excels it in pride and luxury—all is grand and majestic."

The style of architecture adopted was an innovation. "Some find fault," Sauval continues, "that a woman should have built in the (rugged) Tuscan style, but their criticisms cease when they remember that it was a Tuscan princess, who wished to celebrate in France the style of her native country."

The Pitti Palace, in fact, suggested the Luxembourg, and the unfortunate though natural desire of the poor queen to introduce Italian fashions reminded the French people of the evils which another daughter of the house of Medici had already brought upon France.

Marie de Médicis, unconscious of the silent dislike of the French people, took intense delight in the embellishment of her new home. Little is left of its interior splendours, for Napoleon redecorated its apartments, and the Emperor's modifications have in turn been swept away; but the imposing edifice, whose columns suggest superimposed millstones, still defies the rage of revolutions. Rubens came twice to Paris to plan and place his magnificent series of paintings flaunting the triumphs of the Queen, which has now found fitting enshrinement in the Louvre. The gallery from which they have been stripped is still a regal presence-chamber, and the long staircase, though untrodden by obsequious courtiers, tells of the difficulty of mount-



PALACE OF THE LUXEMBOURG.

By permission of Giraudon.



CHÂTEAU OF MAISONS.

ing to royal favour. There remains one room, hidden away on the ground floor of the north wing, whose decoration has been absolutely unchanged since the time of Marie de Médicis. It was her bedchamber, and is protected by a *salle des gardes*. The walls and ceilings of this room are covered with the most exquisite Italian Renaissance tracery in black, gold, and colours; arabesques of vases, scrollwork, masks, little Loves, garlands, and other fancies, most charmingly and inexhaustibly varied and multiplied by mirrors. Oddly enough, the windows of this room look across the parterre to the only existing feature of the Queen's garden—the Médicis fountain. Of all the attractions of her great gardens (and we are told that they contained every ingenious device that could be imagined), the Queen must have loved this fountain best. Such as it was when she looked out upon it from these windows it is to-day, with possibly an added grace—that of pathetic association. The trees throw deeper shadows on the long basin, their trunks are draped with festoons of ivy, and the statues are darkened by encroaching moss. When Marie de Médicis built the Luxembourg her gardens were laid out in the midst of a waste district, but the nobles were quick to follow her lead, and the Faubourg Saint Germain, then outside the walls, first obtained its prestige as the aristocratic quarter. It had then a suburban character, "very agreeable," says Sauval, "from the mixture of its vast gardens and great hotels."

But while the *régente* was enjoying the fruition of her long-planned ambition, Richelieu was developing a rival one, to be embodied in a more extensive building

—his great Palais Cardinal (to be called later the Palais Royal), built in close proximity to the Louvre, in the new fashionable quarter of the city. The Cardinal claimed to be its sole architect, and that Le Mercier only carried out his design. Possibly his pretensions were as groundless as those of the Marquise de Rambouillet, who imagined that she had introduced a new style of architecture at this time, because she changed the position of her staircase, invented an alcove for her bedroom, and decorated her salon in blue instead of the conventional red.

The châteaux of France knew Richelieu as a destroyer rather than as a creator, for in 1626 he revolutionised the system of French architecture by decreeing the destruction of all *châteaux forts*, and their non-erection in the future. This edict was epoch-making in its far-reaching consequences. Richelieu had in mind only the reduction of the grand vassals, who had been the peers of their sovereign, to impotent parasites; the strengthening the power of the monarchy by rendering it impossible for those who stood nearest the throne to rebel; but he did not foresee that in so doing he made them incapable of protecting their King and themselves in their time of need. It was the dictum of Louis XIII.'s great minister that fortresses should be tolerated only on the frontier, to protect the country from foreign invasion. The King needed no defences within his kingdom. This attitude was inspired by no puerile confidence in the love and loyalty of his subjects, but by an insulting disdain of their power. His palace became a model for the architects of the new era. All suggestion of the grim towers and encircling wall of the feudal castle were

to be swept away. No poetic memory or pretty mimicry in tiny *tourelle* or useless drawbridge, no ornamental cornice simulating a crenellated battlement, or other reminiscent vagaries of mediæval days was to linger, as in the fantastical creations of the earlier French architects. The styles of architecture during the reigns of the four Bourbon Louis were to be a progressive development of the Renaissance, varied, as we shall see, by the different requirements of life during each period.

The Luxembourg was the first château to be built on a different plan from the closed square with interior court, and to stand exposed in gardens which swept away on every side, with no protecting *enceinte*.

Henceforth the outward aspect of the palace and of the château of the noble took on the frank expression of what it really was—a magisterial public building, or a dignified modern home. Poetry, romance, the glamour of the imagination, was vanishing from life; what remained was uncompromisingly practical, and the architects of the seventeenth century solved the problem placed before them by devising buildings admirably adapted to the manner of life of the time. The results left us by Desbrosses, Le Mercier, and Le Vau are always stately and impressive, though sometimes cold and monotonous, while under the hands of François Mansart they rose to great nobility and even beauty.¹

¹ Nicolas François Mansart (called the elder Mansart in distinction from his nephew, Jules Hardouin, who assumed the name of Mansart on the death of his uncle), born June 23, 1598, died September 23, 1666.

He first came into notice by extensive additions to the Hôtel Carnavalet (begun by Lescot) and to the château of Blois, where the grand entrance hall and staircase, built by Gaston d'Orléans, are not sufficiently admired because contrasted with the more picturesque earlier portions of the château.

His just sense of proportion—well-ordered arrangement of masses, and admirable restraint in the treatment of the monumental style—could not fail to be appreciated. He designed and began the church of Val de Grâce for Anne of Austria, and built a number of hôtels and châteaux, such as the hôtel of the Marquis de la Vrillière, now the Banque de France. But if he had done nothing beside the château of Maisons for the Marquis de Longueil, this perfectly satisfactory model of what the home of a grand seigneur should be under the existing conditions,—it would have sufficed to make him famous. It preserves in a wonderful manner with the absence of all affectation of rivalry or opposition, which the monarchy would no longer tolerate, a self-respecting dignity, which the noble, conscious of his high descent, could not give up. It may seem at first sight heavy and cold, but it is also very solid and genuine. The prevailing amplitude suggests the coming of broader ideas. We found but one other château—lordly Beaumesnil, in Normandy (and it, strange to say, the work of an unknown architect)—worthy to rank with this example of the elder Mansart. Arrogant and solid as a feudal stronghold, Beaumesnil has yet an air of palatial modernity which links it with the present, and would make it seem less out of place on one of the avenues of a great city than isolated by its immense deer



CHÂTEAU OF BEAUMESNIL.

From a photograph by J. Wells Champney.

park and by humbler Norman farms from the *grande monde* of which it still seems to dream.

Richelieu, on his death, left his great palace to the boy-king, Louis XIV., who immediately took possession of the legacy; the *régente*, Anne of Austria, finding it a far more commodious dwelling than the Louvre or Tuileries.

This event introduced François Mansart to his most magnificent patron, for Richelieu had been replaced by another minister of State, a greater art connoisseur and spendthrift than himself—the luxurious Cardinal Mazarin, who must in his turn have his Palais Cardinal. The palace was bounded, as the National Library is now, by the rues Vivienne and Richelieu, but its buildings, its stable of one hundred and fifty horses, and its gardens extended from the Palais Royal to the fortifications. On the Rue Vivienne side the original dark brick and stone façade can still be seen, with Mazarin's device—the fascis—carved above the windows; while within the building the long galleries, filled with illuminated MSS., display the same frescoed goddesses that looked down upon the Cardinal's magnificent collections.

François Mansart left his genius and his name to his nephew, Jules Hardouin, who was to carry his style one step farther—from the grand to the magnificent.

But before the younger Mansart attracted the attention of Louis XIV., Le Vau was to have his opportunity to leave his mark upon the century in Fouquet's château of Vaux, whose story has been already told in these pages. Le Vau, called to Versailles, speedily gave place to Jules Hardouin Mansart, who

had won a competition for Madame de Montespan's château of Clagny, and in 1677 began work upon the great southern wing of the palace. This construction so dwarfed Le Vau's main building that the incongruity was apparent to every one, and Mansart was engaged to build the Grand Gallery or Central Pavilion overlooking the garden. Then followed the northern wing, completing the reconstruction of the palace and giving it the longest façade (580 metres) of any building then existing. He continued his work upon Versailles, Trianon, and Marly, and other royal châteaux so long as he lived, for the King was never weary of giving him commissions, or he of carrying them out. His last work, left unfinished at his death in 1708, was the Hôtel des Invalides, whose front remains a perfect example of the Louis Quatorze style, and whose dome remains one of the most prized ornaments of Paris. So greatly appreciated is it even in our own day, that when the most eminent architects planned the International Exposition of 1900 they made it the crowning feature of their scheme, building the Alexander Bridge and opening up a new avenue with the two art palaces on either side, to give an unobstructed vista of the Invalides, though this necessitated the taking down of the Palais de l'Industrie.

The task imposed upon Mansart by his royal patron had been to invent a system of architecture most conducive to the display of human pomp. Perrault had already caught his fancy by his design for altering the Louvre in the so-called colossal style, extending an arcade of double columns from the base to the cornice of the building. His primal requirement of Mansart

for the exterior of his palace was that it should seem one inhabited by a giant; for the interior, that the apartments must be impressive in size and interminable in extent. The garden led up to it by terrace staircases, "on every side an ascent to be mounted in order to reach the spot where Supreme Majesty sat enthroned"; and the palace with court opening into court, guard-room leading to antechamber, and gallery succeeding corridor, must weary the courtier's feet and oppress his mind as he made his difficult way to the royal presence. Mansart in a truly masterly manner gave Louis exactly what he wished, and at the same time achieved an artistic result. The astonished courtiers were led on from marvel to marvel, until they stood at last before the windows of the Salle des Glaces, when there burst upon them the illimitable vista of terrace stepping down to *boulingrin*, *tapis-vert* unrolling to the *pièce d'eau*, and the canal shimmering under the sunset rays seemingly leading straight to the gates of Paradise; and what wonder if before that glorious vision the dazzled beholder acknowledged that Louis the Magnificent had not overstepped the fitting when he chose as his device the sun in all its glory. For forty years the most able artists in every department laboured upon Versailles, under the direction of Mansart, Le Brun, and Le Nôtre. The painters Mignard, Van der Meulen, Coypel, Delafosse, and many others decorated the interior of the palace; and the sculptors Coysevox, Girardon, Couston, Marsy, Puget, Tuby, Van Cleve, and Caffieri are only a few of the men of eminence who gave their lives to beautifying the buildings and the gardens. Charles Le Brun was the master mind—

the Art Director, whose designs the most talented carried out. The manufactory of the Gobelins, also under his direction, poured out its marvels of tapestries, its great set of silver furniture, and pieces of goldsmith work; and the *ébéniste* Boulle made possible the more artistic creations of the cabinet-makers of Louis XV.; while the manufactories of Lyons furnished their rich velvets and gorgeous brocades.

The total cost of Versailles has been variously estimated. Five hundred millions of francs (a hundred millions of dollars) is probably beneath the truth. To this is to be added Louis's additions to the Louvre, Fontainebleau, Saint Germain, Chambord, and other châteaux. No accounts give the amounts which should have been paid for forced labour. The soldiers had their wage, but peasants were compelled to leave their crops and labour without pay, at the same time feeding themselves and their horses. Thirty-six thousand labourers were employed at one time, and this when La Bruyère wrote: "Certain wild animals, male and female, are to be seen in country places, black, sunburned, affixed to the soil, which they dig and turn over with invincible persistence. They have a kind of articulate voice, and when they rise on their feet they show a human face, and in fact they are men. They retire at night into dens, where they live on black bread, water, and roots; they save other men the trouble of sowing, toiling, and reaping, and they do not deserve to lack the bread which they have sown."

Vauban showed himself as great as a political economist as an engineer, for he laboured long upon the problem of the relation of capital to labour and an-

ticipated many of the conclusions of our own day; but when Louis refused to consider his humanitarian schemes and proscribed the book in which he explained them, he understood the utter selfishness of the monarch to whom he had devoted his life, and died of a broken heart.

Meantime, with no compunction that the workmen died by hundreds of malarial fevers, of famine, and by accident, the great Palace of Versailles was triumphantly completed.

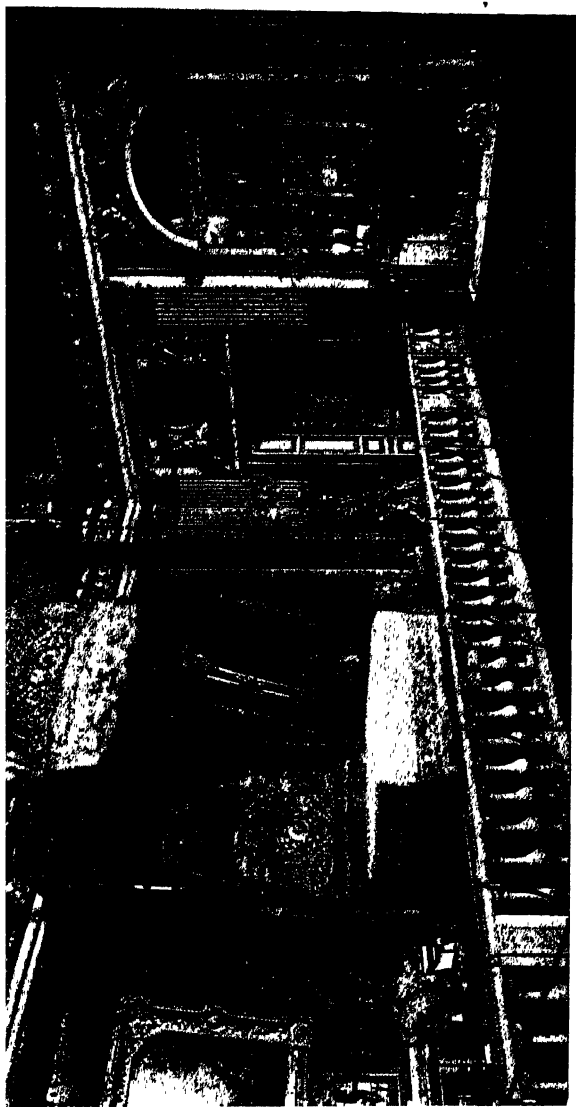
The seventeenth century having achieved this prodigy, there seemed nothing more for the eighteenth to accomplish. It could go no farther on the lines laid down by the Grand Monarque, but a reaction set in at his death against the grand style, a revolt from the dominant characteristics of his reign—formality, ceremony, oppressive grandeur, and wearisome magnificence. The wild license of the Regency was but the swing of the pendulum from the hypocrisy, cant, and bigotry of Louis XIV.'s later years; and the art of the reign of Louis XV. was to express new ideals of what was most desirable in life. Pleasure *sans façon*, elegance, grace, and luxury were suggested by a thousand wayward fancies and coquettish, dainty devices. Immensity, infinity,—all ideas that wearied the mind, even the thought of infinite existence,—had gone out of fashion; and the Pompadour introduced the art and the intrigues of the *petits appartements*. Many of the great salons of Versailles were remodelled into charming little suites, boudoirs, and cabinets, and secret staircases and passages were contrived within the walls to make life more luxurious and licentious.

The great *chambres de parade* of Louis XIV. and

the less ceremonious and more home-like rooms of his successor exist side by side, and show how immense was the gain in convenience of interior arrangement.

Artists laboured now with the same devotion to decorate a teacup which they had formerly given to the casting of a colossal bronze statue. Great ambitions and aspirations were ridiculous to the human butterflies who frolicked their little hour, concerned only with the thought of how to make it most agreeable in the passing. A pleasure-loving society like the eighteenth century would not endure a heroic style of architecture or ornaments of colossal trophies suggesting victories won by difficult achievement; it demanded the pretty and the petty—the exquisitely finished. Severity and monotony, even regularity and symmetry, were banished; asymmetric curves contrasted each other in fascinating variety in twisted candelabra and carved woodwork, whose very contours coquetted—the curves pursuing and fleeing each other in cartouche and shell designs.

Watteau's paintings give the high-water mark of the tendencies of the period. But Watteau was better than the world of the Regency in which he lived. He depicts its mischievous maidens and gallant courtiers, their love for music and dancing and the theatre, their elegancies of costume, and charming *fêtes champêtres* in the gardens which Le Nôtre had created. He had lived at the Luxembourg, the guest of its Intendant, under the erratic Duchesse de Berri, and painted many of his earlier pictures in its gardens, as his later ones in the garden of Chantilly. One of these reproduced in this volume shows the Princesse de Conti on horseback, returning from a hunt in the



VERSAILLES, BEDROOM OF LOUIS XIV.
By permission of Neurdein Frères.

park.¹ Watteau gave more of himself than of his *monde* in these exquisite idyls. The dainty charm, the poetic sentiment, the distinction, and, above all, the refinement—like the opulent colour and the rhythm of composition—are all his own. A gentle melancholy pervades some of his most charming pictures, and we are told that he was by nature sad and solitary, though (perhaps because) a frequenter of the gayest society. On his first arrival in Paris he was employed in scene-painting and in the designing of theatrical costumes, and this training had its influence upon his style. The ladies of the opera, Gilles, the popular clown of the Comédie Italienne, were painted by him, and were his friends. He sublimated the stage as he did nature and fashion, giving us as their quintessence the art of Watteau.

Boucher marks more perfectly the ideals of the succeeding Louis Quinze period, for Boucher was the direct exponent and favourite painter of the Marquise de Pompadour, though she was also the patroness of Fragonard, Lancret, La Tour, Van Loo, Nattier, and Drouais. She must be credited with encouraging letters and giving France, while she reigned, its prestige in the fine arts. So subservient was her indolent lover that it would be more correct to speak of the reign of La Pompadour than of that of Louis XV., for she not only originated and carried to completion great artistic and literary enterprises, like the manu-

¹ The stables of Chantilly, erected by Louis Henri de Bourbon, seventh Prince de Condé, 1719-1755, is a model of Louis Quinze architecture. It was at Chantilly that racing was introduced in France, and its races are still a leading event in the sporting world.

factory of Sèvres and the encyclopedia, but she made and unmade ministers and declared war. She was a fastidious critic as well as a munificent patroness of the Sèvres porcelains; She took the greatest interest in perfecting the colours, and many different shades were produced before one was found exquisite enough to receive the designation "Rose Pompadour." Her taste is shown in the decoration also, not alone in the love-knots, garlands, and Cupids (which were devices especially dear to her successor, the Comtesse du Barry), but in the birds copied from the collections of Buffon and in the *chinoiseries* of Leguay, prompted by the opening of commerce with the extreme Orient. At her instance Louis XV. caused a sale of Sèvres china to be held on New Year's Day in the Galerie des Glaces, at which he presided and fixed the price. On one occasion he saw a courtier put a cup in his pocket, and on the next day the King sent him the saucer with the bill. An attendant was equally shrewd, for, seeing a lady commit a like theft, he said to her:

"Pardon, Madame, I was mistaken; the cup which I just sold you is only twenty-one livres. I must return you this change for the louis you were about to give me."

With such precedent, connoisseurship and reckless extravagance became the vogue. No period and no country ever displayed such uniformity of faultless taste in decoration of all kinds, even to the most trivial objects, as France under the Pompadour. Patch-boxes and *bonbonnières* of filigree and enamel, snuff-boxes whose covers were miniatures set in jewels, caskets of carved ivory or damascened metals, and all the infinitude of *bijou*

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terie and jewellery, toilet articles, ornaments and toys, clocks and lustres and furniture and bric-à-brac of every description were produced by artists of the first talent, who were content to labour for years in their elaboration. In ironwork, Jean Lamour, artificer of the grilles of Nancy, led the army of smiths who wrought the lace-like balustrades and gates of the period. The name of Gouthière le Beau is eminent as a *ciseleur* in brass, especially for his beautiful work for the pavillon of Madame du Barry. But he is only the best-known of an hundred other decorators and metal-workers, such as Meissonier, Oppenort, and Germain, who executed dainty statuettes as mounts for desks, garlands of roses, and volutes of acanthus as ornaments for flambeaux and sconces: cherub-heads as knobs for bureaux, *étuis* in gold *repoussé*, intricate bronze locks for doors, brazen serpents as bolts for windows, and brass and silver sheets cut as though they were paper and superimposed to make a marquetry on ebony and tortoiseshell; while *ébénistes* achieved triumphs in marquetry, and Martin spread his wonderful varnish on the panels of carriages and cabinets.

Louis XV.'s favourite architect was Jacques Ange Gabriel, the builder of Compiègne, and of the great wing near the chapel at Versailles, and in 1766 of the Petit Trianon. If the King had had the resources at his command Gabriel would have reconstructed the entire palace in the then popular Neo-Grec style. But the desire, as well as the ability, to build immense châteaux had passed, and Compiègne was to be the last of the great palaces. The jewel-box châteaux of La Muette and Bagatelle (la Folie

d'Artois) now came into fashion, following the exquisite Pavillon du Barry. Magnificent hôtels, or town houses, had been built during the latter part of the reign of Louis XIV., and De Cotte's Golden Gallery of the Hôtel Toulouse, now the Banque de France, the Hôtel Soubise, decorated by Boffrand (1735 to 1740), and others in this neighbourhood still exist.¹ The last really palatial town house was built by Gabriel for the audacious Duchesse de Bourbon, daughter of Louis XIV. and La Vallière. She chose one of the finest sites of Paris—the western extremity of the Boulevard Saint Germain, facing the Pont de la Concorde (then called the Pont Bourbon), the Place de la Concorde, and, at the end of Rue Royale, the church of the Madeleine, to which the Bourbon Palace was to be the pendant. It was fifty years in building, and owed its preservation during the Revolution, despite its hated name, to its use by the Conseil de Cinq Cents. It is now the Chambre des Députés; but in spite of a century of republican service it is still popularly known as the Palais Bourbon. Under Louis XVI. palace- and château-building practically ceased. The villa was now the vogue, and Blondel, one of the most able architects of the period, wrote an important work on these *Maisons de Plaisances*.

The discovery of the temples of Pæstum achieved the triumph of the classical style, always beloved by Gabriel, and turned the popular taste definitely from the capricious and voluptuous curves so long in vogue to the severe lines of the antique. The change to

¹ They can best be traced with the aid of Monsieur Charles Normand's *Nouvel Itinéraire: Guide Artistique et Archéologique de Paris*.

straight lines, symmetry, and rigidity marked a return to rectitude in matters of taste and morals,—a super-refined taste clogged with luxury hungered for simplicity. The recognition of the excellence of uprightness came too late, and the French people, accustomed to the depravity of the previous Bourbon kings, could not credit the virtue of Louis XVI.

Given the pre-existing conditions, there is a fatalism in the sequence of events which, while it does not cancel human responsibility, makes the thoughtful student hesitate to judge by the standards of to-day those who fancied that the old régime would last for ever, and lived as they had been bred,—joyously, insolently, and thoughtlessly,—“till the flood came and destroyed them all.” Thiers, with his sense of justice, endeavoured to put himself, in imagination, in the place of both noble and peasant.

“I alternately figured to myself,” he said, “that, born in a cottage, animated with a just ambition, I was resolved to acquire what the pride of the higher classes had unjustly refused me; or that, bred in palaces, the heir to ancient privileges, it was painful for me to renounce a possession which I regarded as a legitimate property. Thenceforward I could not harbour enmity against either party, and I admired generous deeds wherever I found them.”

When one understands the wrongs that the peasant had to revenge,—the hatreds that had waited so long for their opportunity; that the château was to them the symbol of tyranny, the prison where their ancestors had suffered, an embodied ogre that had sucked their blood for centuries,—one does not wonder that with axe and torch they splintered marvels of stained

glass, sent costly paintings and cabinets crashing upon the stones of the courtyards, burned halls that had witnessed the orgies of Louis XV., and even mutilated the sculptures on the royal tombs of Saint Denis, scattering the dust of the tyrants to the winds.

These volumes are closed, for the Revolution put an end to the building of châteaux. The majority of those which have survived, unless converted into public buildings, are crumbling and will soon disappear. France herself, in the progress of new ideals, does not regret them or that the name of Bourbon is now extinct. She regrets too little the atonement made by the last of the race for the sins of their fathers, a suffering of the innocent for the guilty shared by these beautiful homes; and to the protest of the romancer who mourns their passing, she

"Gives answer to the cause of their great woe,
Inexorably echoing through the vaults,
'T is thus they reap in blood, in blood who sow:
This is the sum of self-absolved faults.' "

THE END





[illegible]